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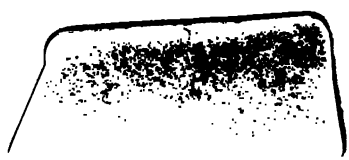

THE

MINSTREL;

OR,

ANECDOTES

OF

DISTINGUISHED PERSONAGES

IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE MINSTREL.

CHAP. XVII.

SEVERAL months thus pleaſingly winged their flight. Eleanor was an early riſer; for as ſhe thought it her duty to conſecrate her days to her noble patrons, ſhe took the early hour of morn for exerciſe, and her own ſolitary amuſement; ſometimes wandering round the environs of the ducheſs's ſeat; ſometimes walking in her hoſpital, and converſing with two very intelligent prieſts who were its governors; and ſometimes

rambling into the adjacent villages, ſhe amuſed herſelf with obſerving the occupations, and liſtening to the diſcourſe, of the harmleſs peaſantry.

One fine morning had tempted her to extend her walk beyond its uſual bounds. The air grew hot, ſhe found herſelf thirſty, and went up to a ſolitary cottage, which ſtood on the edge of a common, to requeſt the refreſhment of a little milk.

She tapt at the door, which was opened by a little boy half-naked.—She entered—what a ſcene met her eyes! On ſome ſtraw, heaped up in one corner, lay a man, whoſe pallid countenance bore the united marks of want, ſickneſs, and grief. Beſide him ſat a middle-aged woman, of an agreeable aſpect, with the deepeſt melancholy pictured on her features, and on the floor was ſeated a very beautiful girl about ſixteen, her dreſs ragged and dirty, and her diſhevelled auburn hair flowing in tangled ringlets on her ſhoulders.

ders. She held in her lap two children, endeavouring to hush them to silence, and still their cries for bread.

The nature of this wretched family's distress required no explanation: with her eyes swimming in tears, our compassionate minstrel drew her purse, and gave the boy who had let her in, a piece of money, directing him to go immediately and buy some bread for his brothers. The boy received it with a shout of pleasure, and ran off.

The man's countenance became flushed with a sickly blush, joy gleamed languidly in his eyes; the woman rose, and with a frantic air poured out her thanks, in a language and manner Eleanor thought utterly inconsistent with their appearance: whilst the young woman, without moving, contemplated with a glowing cheek, and an eye of admiration and astonishment, the heavenly countenance of the charming minstrel.

After ſome little enquiry, Eleanor found, that the late civil contentions had added this unhappy family to the many thouſands they had reduced from affluence to indigence: that by a wound ill healed, the poor man was rendered incapable of performing that labour which misfortunes had rendered neceſſary for the acquirement of daily food for himſelf and his children. The efforts of his wife and family had been ineffectual for that purpoſe, and they had been gradually ſinking into all the horrors of famine.

Eleanor wept over them; but this was not all, for her pity was of the moſt active kind; ſhe haſtened to the next village, which was at about half a mile's diſtance, ſhe bought ſome light proviſions, and ſome cordials, and thus, benevolently laden, cheered the diſtreſſed cottagers.

The man ſhe fed herſelf, leſt the fondneſs of his wife ſhould, by a too liberal ſupply,

ſupply, oppreſs inſtead of nouriſhing hi almoſt exhauſted nature. She made the woman partake, who in the ecſtatic pleaſure of beholding the wants of her beloved huſband relieved, almoſt forgot her own. The handſome maiden was not neglected, whom Eleanor, when ſhe returned, found feeding the poor children with the proviſions which their brother had purchaſed: ſhe roſe at the entrance of our heroine, and glanced her eye with a deep bluſh on her own tattered attire. Eleanor, aſtoniſhed at ſo fine a figure as well as face, beheld her with admiration, whilſt the conſcious eye of Yolante glanced perpetually towards her, and dropt, on perceiving herſelf the object of attention.

After having thus literally fulfilled the precept of the goſpel "Feeding the hungry," Eleanor gave the remaining contents of her purſe to the woman, to buy herſelf ſome neceſſaries, and render her ſituation more comfortable. She

then left them, laden with the reiterated benediction of the whole family, and took her way back to Ewelme with a light heart and agile ſteps, with ſpirits exhilarated by the conſciouſneſs of having performed the duties of humanity.

The weather becoming wet, it was ſome mornings ere Eleanor could renew her viſit to the cottage, and when ſhe did, was pleaſingly ſurprized at the agreeable alteration ſhe perceived there. The faces of its inhabitants were illumined with a ſmile of joy at the ſight of their benefactreſs; cheerfulneſs had ſpread itſelf over the languor of the ſick man's countenance; the indolence with which deſpair had overwhelmed them, was done away; the ſqualidneſs of their poverty was removed, their houſe was cleared; their habiliments were ſtill tattered, but even their rags now wore an air of neatneſs, particularly on the lovely Yolante.

Eleanor ſat down, whilſt looks of mutual ſatisfaction paſſed between her and them.

them. She had now leiſure for obſervation: in the converſation and manners of Robert and Philippa, ſhe not only found much good ſenſe, but alſo ſtrong marks of cultivated minds, and ſuperiority of ſtation; and ſhe remarked of their daughter, that though timid to exceſs, ſcarcely ſpeaking, and darting her fine eyes in quick and reſtleſs glances like a frighted deer, yet her baſhfulneſs was totally different from the ruſticity of the common villager. Theſe appearances ſtrongly excited the curioſity of Eleanor; but delicacy forbade her ſeeming to take advantage of their obligations to her, to impel them to a painful retroſpection.

Every morning that the weather permitted, the ſteps of Eleanor were directed to the cottage; and every morning ſhe had the ſatisfaction of obſerving a change for the better in its inhabitants, particularly in Robert, for whom ſhe had procured the aſſiſtance of a man eminent for curing wounds. His lameneſs, which

was occaſioned by unſkilful treatment, was happily removed by more judicious applications, and he was in a ſhort time capable of offering himſelf as a huſbandman to a neighbouring farmer.

One morning our heroine made her uſual viſit, and found Philippa by herſelf, much to her ſatisfaction, as it afforded her an opportunity ſhe had long wiſhed for, of gratifying her curioſity. She ſeated herſelf, and after ſome civil prefacings, ſaid, that, convinced by a thouſand circumſtances, that neither ſhe nor her huſband were born in the humble ſtation they now filled, ſhe found it impoſſible to reſiſt a deſire of being informed (if the recital would not pain her too much) by what misfortunes they had been depreſt to it."

Philippa heard the requeſt with a deep ſigh, "your penetration," ſaid ſhe, "my "heavenly benefactor, is equal to your "goodneſs—we were indeed both born "with expectations far different from "thoſe

" thoſe our lot of life has realiſed.
" My tale is not long; nor, alas! is it
" uncommon; for how many families
" like us, once in affluence, now, like
" us alſo, labour under the depreſſion
" of extreme poverty!

" My father, a valiant knight of a
" noble family, reſided at a caſtle not
" many miles diſtant from this place.
" He, an only ſon, inherited immenſe
" riches from his father, which he was
" himſelf ſuppoſed greatly to encreaſe.
" Two ſons, and my unfortunate ſelf—
" unfortunate in the hour of my birth,
" for it coſt my mother her life—were
" all his offspring. My childhood paſſed
" in happineſs, my father was indul-
" gent, and my brothers affectionate.
" As my perſon was not deſpicable, and
" my fortune ſuppoſed to be large, I
" was attended by a croud of ſuitors,
" from among whom my heart ſelected
" Robert, in my eyes the moſt amiable,
" though the leaſt affluent; for his fa-

" ther, a younger brother of a noble
" houſe, poſſeſſed more honour than
" riches. From motives of paternal ten-
" dernefs, my dear parent conſented to
" the union, gave me a very conſiderable
" portion, and by the deſire of Robert's
" father, we went to reſide with him.

" For ſome years happily—oh! how
" happily! we exiſted; obliging and
" obliged, mutual affection winged ra-
" pidly thoſe hours of felicity. At
" length the ſpirit of faction lifted its
" hideous form, and ſcared domeſtic as
" well as public joy to other lands. The
" father of my huſband engaged warmly
" as a partiſan of York, my own father
" as ardently on the ſide of Lancaſter:
" my huſband, directed by *his* parent,
" became obnoxious to *mine*.

" Alas! what part in this diſtreſſing
" dilemma was allowed me to take?—
" unhappy thoſe who are involved in
" family diſagreements! whoſe duties
" jar, who are conſtrained by terrible
" neceſſity

" neceſſity to leave the one or the other
" unfulfilled! I reverenced beyond
" words my father, loved my brothers
" with fond affection, yet could I tear my-
" ſelf from the huſband of my heart, the
" parent of my children?—impoſſible!—

" For a long time I ſtruggled to re-
" main neuter, and, in deſpite of the irrita-
" tions of factions, to preſerve the right
" of nature inviolate.—Vain was the
" attempt. When my efforts had brought
" my huſband and father together, the
" time was ſpent in endeavours to con-
" vert each other: incenſed at mutual
" oppoſition, each became enraged at the
" blind obſtinacy, as he deemed it, of his
" opponent, and more tenacious of his
" own opinions. Averſion ſucceeded to
" coldneſs—they ſaw each other no
" more.—

" My heart was torn with anguiſh,
" and I was continually in tears. Ro-
" bert's father was diſpleaſed, and re-
" proved me for my grief ſo harſhly,

" that I was conſtrained to aſſume a
" cheerfulneſs I was incapable of feeling,
" and deny myſelf the poor relief of be-
" moaning my ſorrows.

" Hoſtilities at laſt commenced; our
" lands lay in the roads of the two ar-
" mies, and we found friends or foes
" equally deſtructive; our corn was
" trampled to the earth, our fences
" broken down, our houſes and barns
" burnt, and my father-in-law died
" fighting for the duke of York. His
" eſtates were confiſcated by the queen,
" and we turned as vagabonds into the
" world, little capable, from habitual af-
" fluence, of working for our bread; and
" my huſband rendered utterly helpleſs
" by ſome deſperate wounds he got in
" defence of his father.

" Wretched examples of the direful
" effects of civil war, we wandered, we
" knew not whither; chance directed our
" ſteps to this obſcure hovel, which pro-
" bably belongs to ſome ruined lord,

" for

" for no one has claimed it. Here we
" took up our melancholy abode.
" After long illneſs, occaſioned by
" exceſs of grief, I turned my thoughts
" on my long neglected father.—Bleſſed
" mother of eternal Jeſus! how did I
" ſurvive the intelligence which my en-
" quiries diſcloſed!—My father and my
" two brothers had been beſieged by
" the Yorkiſts in his own caſtle. So
" cruel had been the general cuſtom on
" both ſides to their priſoners of note,
" that theſe dear friends, though con-
" ſcious that they were unable long to de-
" fend themſelves againſt their aſſailants,
" yet determined to die in action rather
" than be butchered in cold blood, and
" never to capitulate: they therefore
" all three fell defending each other;
" the caſtle was taken by ſtorm, its va-
" luable effects were abandoned to the
" plunder of the ſoldiery, its domains
" confiſcated, and I, the wretched
" heireſs of immenſe wealth, reduced,

" by

" by the alternate ſway of two powerful
" factions, to the moſt extreme penury,
" muſt inevitably have periſhed by hun-
" ger, with my huſband and children,
" had not the hand of Heaven, when
" we were near expiring, directed your
" benevolent ſteps, my generous bene-
" factor, to our aſſiſtance."

After a moment's muſing, Eleanor enquired particularly the ſituation of the caſtle which belonged to Philippa's father; ſhe received ſufficient information to aſſure her it was the ſame in which ſhe paſſed the night, when terrified by the ghoſt of St. Maur; and ſhe regarded her weeping hoſteſs with an eye of ſo much ſatisfaction, that the good woman perceived it—" You look pleaſed," ſhe cried—" my God! can my melancholy
" tale give pleaſure to a heart like yours?"

"I ſincerely commiſerate your ſorrows," replied Eleanor, " and the joy you might
" diſcover in my eyes aroſe from a plan
" which then darted acroſs my mind for
" your

" your eſſential relief—but more of this
" another time, when I have digeſt-
" ed it into ſome order. I muſt now
" haſten home to prepare for a journey
" which I ſhall take to-morrow, and in
" which I muſt entreat your Robert to ac-
" company me—he ſhall return to you at
" night. I muſt requeſt him to be ready
" very early; and give him this money
" to hire a horſe for him to ride upon."
Philippa aſſured her of the ready acquieſ-
cence of her huſband, and they parted.

The harp of Eleanor, all the following day, was reſponſive to her own gene-rous feelings, and ſhe gladdened the houſehold of the noble Alice with her lively and joyous notes. She requeſted the permiſſion of the ducheſs to be ab-ſent on the morrow: it was granted, to-gether with the uſe of a horſe; but ſhe declined the attendance of a groom, or a page, which her patroneſs offered her.

Summer was now in its prime; our heroine ſprang from her bed at the firſt dawn

dawn of day; a groom ſaddled her ſteed, and threw acroſs it, by her own deſire, a large pair of wallets with ſome cold proviſion; and ſhe ſallied forth with all the generous enthuſiaſm of a knight in the days of chivalry, proceeding to right the wrongs, and relieve the wants of mankind.

The grateful cottagers were juſt riſing; the countenance of Yolante beamed with a ſweet ſmile, and her cheek was doubly tinged by the living vermeil, as ſhe glanced her quick and conſcious eye on the minſtrel. Robert was ſoon prepared; they took a tender leave, and were quickly out of ſight of the cottage.

"I have a great mind," ſaid Eleanor, ſtopping her horſe, "I have an uncon-
"querable curioſity, Robert, to view the
"ruins of your father-in-law's caſtle—
"will you conduct me thither?"

The idea of ſeeing it gave Robert no pleaſing ſenſations; his grateful heart, how-

however, could not think of oppoſing the wiſh of his beneſactor, and they turned their horſes heads that way.

In two hours riding the caſtle was in ſight; they paſſed the draw-bridge, tied the horſes in the court, and entered, Robert bearing the wallet of proviſions on his arm.

The deſolate ſtate of the well-known hall, once the ſeat of conviviality, affected Robert, and a long-drawn ſigh ſpoke his ſenſations. Eleanor ſaw him endeavouring to diſperſe the tears which were gathering in his eyes, and her heart exulted in the hope of diſpelling them for ever: but ſhe did not dare to diſcloſe her thoughts, leſt ſome other perſon might, like herſelf, have diſcovered the treaſures, and ſhe ſhould overwhelm him with diſappointment, at the moment when ſhe meant to ſecure his happineſs.

Impatient for the *denouement*, ſhe aſcended the ſtairs with perturbation, followed

lowed by her companion. She led into the bed-chamber—Robert heaved another deep ſigh—"this," ſaid he, "was "the apartment of ſir Philip." Eleanor opened the cloſet-door, and aſked him if he was acquainted with that place? He replied, he was not. "Then," ſaid ſhe, with a ſmile, "I believe I know more "of the caſtle than you do."

She lifted up the tapeſtry and unfaſtened the door.—Robert looked ſurprized; but much more ſo when ſhe bade him follow her up the long flight of dark and winding ſtairs. She entered the little chamber, opened the window, and eagerly looked round.—Her heart bounded, her pulſe beat high, her eyes flaſhed with joy, and a rich carmine overſpread her heavenly countenance, when ſhe perceived every thing as ſhe left it.

Exceſs of pleaſure held her ſome moments mute, whilſt Robert beheld the change in her countenance with ſilent wonder: Her eyes glanced their vivid beams

beams from the chefts to him—ſhe pointed to them—" examine them," ſhe articulated—" THEY ARE YOURS."

He examined them with trembling haſte, and increaſing amazement; and then, with wildneſs in his manner, demanded what all this meant.

" They were without doubt," ſhe replied, " ſir Philip's, and doubtleſs alſo they " are your wife's, as heir to her father."

" My wife's—oh ye hoſt of Heaven!"—an ecſtaſy of unutterable joy ſwelled his heart, and expreſſed itſelf in ſuch frantic actions, that Eleanor was terrified at her own abruptneſs. She had been afraid of a premature diſcovery, leſt accident might have diſappointed him: and now ſhe dreaded, leſt the ſudden flood of pleaſure ſhould overwhelm him. He called her his ſaviour, his preſerver—every tender and grateful name which occurred to his agitated imagination: at length, a flood of tears relieved him.

Finding

Finding him ſoon ſomewhat compoſed, Eleanor adviſed the ſpeedy removal of the treaſures, as there was no doubt but the domains of the caſtle would quickly be given to ſome needy favourite.

The wallet, which Robert ſtill held on his arm, was now of uſe. The proviſions were taken out.—Robert could not touch a morſel, and Eleanor, after ſo rich an intellectual feaſt, had little appetite for the groſs food of ſenſe.—The wallet was filled with bags of money; they faſtened carefully the doors and window, and went down into the hall, as a place of agreeable coolneſs; Robert taking the proviſions down with him, "for," ſaid he, "my benefactor "will be faint, I muſt prevail upon him to "eat." Eleanor thought it would be moſt prudent not to return to the cottage till evening, and they ſpent the remainder of their time in looking over the building; Robert pointing out ſcenes of former happineſs.

They

They reached the cottage an hour after ſun-ſet; the children and Yolante were gone to their repoſe, and Philippa ſat alone, impatient and uneaſy at her huſband's long abſence. She heard the trampling of horſes, and flew to welcome them, expreſſing her fears leſt ſome accident had befallen them.

Eleanor replied kindly to her greetings; but Robert was too much agitated to utter a word. The horſes were tied to a little out-houſe; Robert took up the bag, heavy as it was, upon one arm, his wife held by the other; but unable to conquer his perturbations, his wife perceived them. —"Good heavens!" ſhe cried, "how you "tremble! Robert, my dear Robert, "you are very ill—Oh, ſir! my huſ- "band!"—

"Do not alarm yourſelf, my good Phi- "lippa," ſaid Eleanor, "your huſband is in "perfect health—ſome unexpected good "fortune agitates his ſpirits—he would "impart to you the pleaſing intelligence,

"but

" but his nerves have not yet conquered
" the ſurprize."

"Unexpected good fortune!—Pleaſing
" intelligence!"—ſhe exclaimed, her eyes brightening, and her colour heightened; a moment's reflexion clouded the ſunſhine, a heavy and deſponding ſigh declared her ſcepticiſm. "Fortune," ſhe cried, "can have few good things in
" ſtore for me——In my father's grave
" is buried all my expectations of her
" gifts."——

They had by this time entered the cottage. Robert let the wallet drop its heavy and cumberous weight on the floor, and ſunk into a chair. He caſt his eyes, gleaming with his ſtruggling paſſions, on his wife, who eagerly watched their ambiguous expreſſion, and impatiently waited for that explanation from his lips, which his throbbing heart, impeding his utterance, denied her. His eyes ſunk under her inquiſitive glances, they darted with beams of gratitude

titude on Eleanor: he ſtarted from his ſeat, ſeized the hands of his affrighted wife, hurried her to the minſtrel, ſunk on his knees, and drew Philippa into the ſame poſture.

"Oh! bleſs," cried he ſobbing, "bleſs "with me this angel of benevolence, in "mercy ſent from Heaven firſt to ſnatch "us from death, and then to conduct us to "riches.—Oh! Philippa, my deareſt wife! "bleſs our benefactor, and adore that "gracious God who ſent him to us."—

"Riſe, Robert," cried the agitated Eleanor, endeavouring to raiſe them from the ground, "your grateful tranſ-"ports alarm and affrighten your Phi-"lippa—riſe, explain the occaſion, and "let her partake your joy.—I cannot bear "this poſture—it becomes not creatures "to creatures—to me no praiſe is due, "I am but the inſtrument of Providence "to reſtore to you your own: and large "is my reward in beholding the hap-"pineſs it gives.—You diſtreſs me—riſe."

They

They aroſe; the panting Philippa, in breathleſs expectation of ſome wonderful tale, gazed alternately on them both. In broken accents, and half-formed ſentences, Robert dropt into her greedy ears the ſurpriſing incident.—What pencil can do juſtice to her varying countenance during the intereſting recital, as ſhe, by degrees, from a mangled ſtory, caught the tranſporting event?—or what pen to the rapid, energetic, enthuſiaſtic expreſſions of her gratitude? I muſt veil in ſilence what I am unable to deſcribe.

In the morning Eleanor was again at the cottage as ſhe had promiſed, to aſſiſt at a conſultation on the beſt mode of concealing the treaſure: and after ſome deliberation it was reſolved, to take up the flooring of an inner room, which ſerved as a bed-chamber, and which by ſome unaccountable caprice *had* a floor, to dig a pit ſufficient to hold the cheſts, and replace the floor over them.

This

This work was not procraſtinated: the whole family united their efforts, and the treaſure was all brought home and depoſited in perfect privacy; for the cottage ſtanding by itſelf, as did alſo the caſtle, no one remarked the frequent viſits made from one to the other.

CHAP. XVIII.

ROBERT, by the advice of Eleanor, made no viſible alteration in his manner of living, which could attract the attention of the neighbourhood, or excite an impertinent, perhaps dangerous curioſity. But though he declined the appearance of affluence, it was natural, for the ſake of his wife and family, to wiſh for eaſe and convenience, neither of which it was poſſible to experience in their preſent ruinous dwelling: but he was loth to quit it for a better houſe, having in it, with ſuch ſecurity, depoſited his treaſure.

He enquired to whoſe *barony*, or in a more modern phraſe, to whoſe *manor* it belonged, and would have immediately

applied to its lord for the purchaſe ; but he heſitated in fear of a refuſal from a man tenacious of power, and jealous of diminiſhing his domain ; and apprehenſive, that on ſuch application, he ſhould either be obliged to quit it, or ſubject himſelf by his ſtay to the condition of villanage, a ſtate the moſt abject and deplorable.

Far, very far diſtant was the condition of the peaſantry of England in thoſe iron times, from the happy freedom of the preſent. *Now*, the poor man ſelecting the place of his reſidence, hires his humble cottage of the rich, and for its annual ſtipend enjoys in it every right of property, but the power of deſtruction. Secure in the ſhelter of its clay walls—his little garriſon—he fears no interruption or annoyance, but reigns the mild lord of the ſmiling family that encircles his cheerful hearth. True, he is obliged to labour for his and their daily ſubſiſtence;

but—at liberty even *here*—he labours in that calling which is moſt agreeable to his inclination, or that he deems moſt ſuitable to his education or abilities; and he boldly claims, nor dares his employer refuſe, the price of his toil.

Then, the kingdom diſtributed into baronies, each lord reigned deſpotic in his diſtrict, and the lower order of peaſants, termed *villains*, were the abject ſlaves of his arbitrary will: in him was the intire property of their perſons, and that of their children, and they were chained to the ſoil, or transferable, like beaſts, at his pleaſure. Diſtributed into ſorry cottages, with a ſmall portion of land aſſigned for their ſubſiſtence, which they were to cultivate in thoſe hours which nature required for reſt to their wearied limbs, they were called to inceſſant toil by their thankleſs tyrant, who claimed their labours in his moſt ſordid and diſguſting menial offices; and inflicted on their

their real, or ſuppoſed diſobedience, any corporal puniſhment his rage or inhumanity ſuggeſted, ſhort of death; for the feeble voice of the law forbade his perpetration of murder, yet was its interpoſition an ineffectual ſecurity to their devoted perſons, for death was often the *ultimate*, though not the *immediate* conſequence of his ſeverity.

As Eleanor, unpractiſed in buſineſs, could give Robert no advice in this nice matter, he conſented that ſhe ſhould conſult one of the ſuperintending prieſts of the hoſpital at Ewelme, with whoſe good ſenſe and general knowledge ſhe had been much charmed in her converſations with him.

" Sir Owen Fitzwalter," ſaid father Gregory, " the lord of the demeſne to " which that cottage belongs, is a young " man, whoſe fortune is ſo much ſhattered, " that he is incapable of repairing the ha- " bitations of his villanage, and many of

"them are in the ſame ruinous condition
" as that you deſcribe; ſo that I have no
" doubt, though his pride will not en-
" dure the appearance of alienating his
" domain, yet, that if your friend will
" conſent to perpetually holding the eſtate
" of him in fief, as *ultimate* proprietor of
" it, this indigent Baron will be induced
" by the offer of money, which he ſo
" much wants, to enfranchiſe it from all
" menial ſervice, and inveſt your friend
" in every real, though not nominal, pri-
" vilege of freedom and property in it.
" For this, I know, is the manner in
" which the poverty of many of our
" great barons, operating on their pride,
" has, in imitation of ſovereign princes
" granting fiefs to their great officers,
" manumitted many families from ſlave-
" ry; their pride tenaciouſly graſping the
" ſhadow of power, whilſt their poverty
" conſtrained them to part from the ſub-
" ſtance; and thus by degrees will free-
" dom ſpread her benign influence over
" the

" the lower orders of our fellow-citizens;
" for the wealth of their oppreſſors is
" every day diſſolving amidſt the enor-
" mous expences of a war, in which both
" ſides ſo eagerly engage, that each no-
" bleman brings into the field an army
" of his own vaſſals, accoutred and main-
" tained at his own ſole charge. The
" indigence conſequent on this conduct
" muſt render the emolument of enfran-
" chiſement deſirable; the oppreſſed
" multitude will gradually be emancipa-
" ted from their iron yoke, the menial
" ſlave will at length enjoy the property
" of his own labour, and the farmer will
" have enſured to him the benefit of
" his agricultural toil. This needy ba-
" ron will, I have no doubt, evince by his
" conduct the truth of what I have aſ-
" ſerted. If you will accompany me to
" his houſe, I ſhall not be afraid, by a
" perſonal application, to make the ex-
" periment, and negotiate the buſineſs
" for your friend."

This offer was too desirable not to be readily accepted; and one morning at sun-rise, our heroine and father Gregory, with each a staff in hand, set out on foot for the seat of sir Owen Fitzwalter. The rural scenes through which they passed, occupied their first attentions. The humid beauties of the dewy morning, the matin song of the feathered choir, the richness of the varying prospects, were copiously expatiated upon by them both; and each was delighted to find in the other's mind, sentiments so congenial to its own. Their mutual liking became insensibly animated. "Your mind, my "young friend," said Gregory, "has "more information than could be ac- "quired in the musical college."—— "And you, my reverend father," the minstrel returned, "I can perceive were "not always the resident of a cell."

"I was not," he replied with a deep and heavy sigh. "No, my education "was in the world; I have witnessed "many

" many of its important ſcenes, and
" experienced variety of its changeful
" ones.—I have been the reſident of a
" court, baſking in the ſun-ſhine of royal
" favour; and have been the wretched
" mendicant, ſupplicating from the ri-
" gid hand of avarice my daily ſubſiſ-
" tence."

" Alas!" cried Eleanor, her humid eyes wandering with an expreſſion of mingled curioſity and pity over his face and form, " What a cruel, what a diſtreſſing change!
" What an inſtructive leſſon would your
" ſtory afford, of the inſtability of all
" earthly enjoyments!—Yet think not I
" ſeek inquiſitively to pry into what you
" may wiſh to conceal—or deſire, that
" for any gratification of my curioſity,
" you ſhould revive remembrances that
" may pain you."

Another heavy ſigh was the only anſwer for ſome moments returned. " The
" recital of my misfortunes at laſt," he ſaid, " flowing from a too common

" ſource—the quarrels and the ambition
" of princes—would afford but ſmall
" inſtruction; but as I have been a
" ſpectator of ſome memorable events,
" the public hiſtory, with which perhaps
" you are not acquainted, and with
" which my fate was inſeparably con-
" nected, may yield you ſome amuſe-
" ment, and beguile the tedioufneſs of
" the way.

" My father was a knight, born in
" the reign of our third Edward: by an
" unſhaken attachment to Richard the
" ſecond, the ſucceſſor of that great
" prince, he became odious to the houſe
" of Lancaſter, when the ſon of Gaunt
" tore the ſceptre from the hand of his
" nephew; and it was not long ere he
" felt the effects of unmerited reſent-
" ment. My father had for ſome time
" been enamoured of the only daughter
" of the lord Dartford, and had the
" happineſs of inſpiring her with a
" reciprocal paſſion. Some obſtacles

" which

" which had intervened were removed:
" lord Dartford had given his conſent to
" the union, when, moſt unfortunately,
" two days before the nuptials were to
" be celebrated, his lordſhip was taken
" ſuddenly ill, and expiring in a few
" hours, his daughter, who was not of
" age, became, by this event, a ward of
" the crown. In vain my father pleaded
" the promiſes of the deceaſed baron, in
" vain the lady proteſted the moſt ſolemn
" engagement; ſolicitation, tears, and
" complaints, were alike ineffectual:
" Henry preremptorily forbade their ſee-
" ing each other, and introduced to his
" ward a venal nobleman of his train
" as her intended ſpouſe.

" Things were in this ſtate when Ma-
" nuel, the Greek emperor, viſited Eng-
" land. The Turks having over-run all
" the eaſtern provinces, and eſtabliſhed a
" permanent monarchy, now threatened
" to complete their conqueſt of the orien-
" tal empire, and the extinction of Chriſti-

" anity on that ſide the globe, by attacking
" Conſtantinople itſelf, the laſt relick of
" Roman greatneſs, and very ill prepared
" for defence againſt ſo formidable a foe.
" The emperor had, by reiterated em-
" baſſies to the weſtern princes, given
" them notice of his danger, and endea-
" voured, by his remonſtrances, to awaken
" in them an active zeal for the cauſe of
" our moſt holy religion. But finding
" them deaf to the voice of his miniſters,
" he took the reſolution of viſiting the
" kingdoms of Europe, and *perſonally* ſo-
" liciting aid againſt the general enemy.
" Manuel paſſed from France to Eng-
" land, was received by the crafty Henry
" with the ſtate of a monarch, and the
" kindneſs of a friend. The uſurper be-
" wailed, with hypocritical tears, the dan-
" ger of the empire, and of religion;
" and the humble ſtate—the ſtate of a
" ſuppliant to inferior princes—to which
" that danger had ſubjected ſo great, ſo
" good a man, who had taken upon
" him-

" himſelf to be the champion of Chriſti-
" anity, the confeſſor of the faith of
" Chriſt.

" His feaſts for the emperor were fre-
" quent and coſtly; his entertainments
" magnificent; and his aſſurances of aid
" profuſe. He even aſſumed the ſym-
" bol of the croiſade, the Bloody Croſs.
" But if he was really in earneſt, and in-
" tended to appeaſe his gnawing con-
" ſcience by this pious ſervice, he found
" it would be very imprudent to leave
" his kingdom, or withdraw his forces
" from the ſupport of his tottering
" throne: and Manuel prepared for his
" departure from England, with ſome
" valuable gifts, many empty honours,
" but no aſſiſtance in the public cauſe.

" During the emperor's reſidence, my
" father had found means to be introduc-
" ed to him, and offered his ſervices as a
" ſingle knight; the offer was graciouſly
" accepted, and Henry's attention be-
" ing ſomething relaxed in the care of

" enter-

" entertaining his imperial gueſt, he met
" his lovely ward, who had conſented to
" leave the kingdom with him. A faith-
" ful prieſt performed the nuptial cere-
" mony; and having previouſly gather-
" ed what part of the fortunes of both
" it was in their power to take with
" them, they abandoned the reſt to the
" mercy of their relations, and the angry
" king. They ſecreted themſelves till
" the hour of Manuel's departure, were
" then received by that monarch into
" his ſuite, who welcomed them in
" the moſt gracious manner, diſtinguiſh-
" ed them both with peculiar favour;
" and after having for two years ex-
" hibited, in the different courts of Eu-
" rope, the humiliating ſcene of a ſup-
" pliant prince, at length the emperor
" returned to Conſtantinople, his wealth
" indeed ſomewhat increaſed by the vari-
" ous rich preſents he had received, but
" without any ſolid advantages.

" For the care of ſecuring his uſurped

" throne,

" throne, as I have ſaid, occupied all the
" the military powers of the king of
" England. Nor was France in a ſtate
" more capable of affording foreign aid;
" for Charles, its unfortunate monarch,
" though he enjoyed ſome lucid inter-
" vals, was ſubject to dreadful parox-
" iſms of furious or ſtupid inſanity, and
" the reins of government were alter-
" nately ſeized by his brother and uncle,
" the dukes of Orleans and Burgundy;
" who by their ambitious contention, and
" the ſpirit of faction it excited in the
" minds of the people, were preparing
" for that unhappy nation, not only all
" the evils of civil ſtrife, but alſo the
" invaſions of the Engliſh, and all the
" horrors of the long and bloody war in
" which it was ſo many years involved.

" Nor was Manuel more ſucceſsful in
" his application to the princes of Ita-
" ly, whoſe attention he found engaged
" in the great ſchiſm of the church;
" all their faculties being abſorbed in the

" diſputes

" diſputes of the popes of Rome and
" Avignon, who were contending for the
" throne of St. Peter. And, unfortunate-
" ly, by a refinement of policy, endea-
" vouring to conciliate the friendſhip of
" both parties, by taking part with
" neither, and abſtaining from all cor-
" reſpondence with the two rivals, he
" grievouſly offended them both, and
" of conſequence their partiſans. His
" holineſs of Avignon reſented his not
" viſiting that city. And as the empe-
" ror paſſed thro' Rome in the year of
" the jubilee, without deigning to ſolicit
" the ſalutary indulgence which is ex-
" tended at that holy ſeaſon to all who
" properly ſue for it, by which, remiſ-
" ſion of all incurred penance is grant-
" ed, pardon of all ſins paſt, and even
" a plenary indulgence for future of-
" fences to thoſe who offer liberally at
" the ſhrine of St. Peter: as it was more-
" over aſſerted, that he refuſed to wor-
" ſhip an image of Chriſt, the Roman
" pon-

" pontiff, not content with ſilent reſent-
" ment, fulminated his anathemas, and
" commanded all Italy to reject and
" abandon the impious and obſtinate
" ſchiſmatic.

" But when every effort of the em-
" peror's had proved ineffectual, all Eu-
" ropean aid denied, the ſtorm ready to
" burſt over his devoted head, the ſavage
" Bajazet begirting the city, ready to de-
" vour it as a certain prey—in that mo-
" ment of deſpondency, by an interpo-
" ſition unlooked for, by the appearance
" of another ſavage ſtronger than him-
" ſelf, was the Ottoman prince con-
" ſtrained to raiſe the ſiege, turn his
" reluctant ſteps from the half-con-
" quered city, and haſten to protect his
" own dominions from the ravages of
" a potent invader, the victorious Tamer-
" lane, who with his immenſe Tartar
" army, having over-run Ruſſia, Perſia,
" and India, threatened the ſubverſion
" of the Turkiſh monarch.

" Thus, when that zeal for our moſt

" holy

" holy religion was expired, which in
" the various cruſades had led ſo many
" millions againſt the infidels; when
" thoſe ſentiments of humanity were
" ſilent in his behalf, which ought to
" have inſpired the European princes
" with compaſſion, and haſtened them to
" the aſſiſtance of a diſtreſſed monarch,
" and a ſinking empire; Manuel was
" reſcued from the impending deſtruc-
" tion, by the operations of ambition
" and cruelty, and the peace of his reign
" ſecured by their conſequences.

" For the armies of Bajazet were
" overthrown by Tamerlane, he himſelf
" was impriſoned, and afterwards mur-
" dered; his ſons were in captivity, his
" kingdom became the prey of the con-
" queror; and, after the death of the
" Tartar king, when his unwieldy em-
" pire diſſolved in the hands of his ſuc-
" ceſſors, and the ſons of Bajazet claim-
" ed the throne of their father, yet their
" mutual animoſities and contentions

" left

" left them neither leiſure nor abilities
" for foreign conqueſts.
" Many years, in uninterrupted peace
" and proſperity, reigned the equally
" wiſe and good Manuel; my father
" was ever dear to him, and flouriſhed in
" his ſervice. The emperor aſſigned
" him a place of honour and profit;
" and on that dear parent's death, it
" devolved on me his only ſon. I had
" married a Greek lady, was bleſt with
" a ſon and daughter; they were—but
" diſtraction lies that way—let me not
" think of them"—He ſighed, pauſed,
" and then, in a broken accent, reſumed,
" Full of years and good works, the
" aged emperor deſcended to his grave,
" beloved and lamented as the father of
" his people. His two ſons, John who
" ſucceeded him in the purple, and
" Conſtantine who aſcended the imperial
" throne on the demiſe of his brother,
" both ſmiled with like kindneſs on me.
" But alas! my good fortune, hitherto

" unin-

" uninterrupted, drew to its period; for
" the fate of Conſtantinople, ſo long
" procraſtinated, approached; the clouds
" gathered heavily round, the tempeſt
" lowered, deſtined to the final deſtruc-
" tion of the Roman empire.

" The ſuperior addreſs and valour of
" Mahomet, the fifth ſon of Bajazet,
" had, after many bloody conteſts with
" his brethren, extinguiſhed all competi-
" tion for his father's throne, and united
" all the diſparted fragments of the
" Turkiſh monarchy under his own do-
" minion, which, after the death of his
" ſon Amurath, deſcended to his grand-
" ſon, Mahomet the ſecond, intire, free
" from all domeſtic hoſtility, and at
" peace with all its neighbours: leaving
" that prince with ample power, and
" full leiſure to accompliſh his ambitious
" purpoſes—for ſoon thoſe purpoſes diſ-
" played themſelves.

" That young aſpiring monarch, de-
" ſcended from a chriſtian princeſs, yet
" the

" the moſt bigoted of Muſſelmen, of
" great intellectual capacity, brave and
" learned, but of a temper the moſt ſa-
" vage and licentious, with paſſions the
" moſt furious, ungoverned, inexorable,
" ſaw with regret Conſtantinople, once
" the queen of nations, now, by the
" gradual encroachments of her ambiti-
" ous neighbours, diveſted of all do-
" main, ſit widowed on her ſeven hills,
" her empire nearly circumſcribed by
" her walls, yet ſtill maintaining her
" ſtate amidſt the hoſtile world; and he
" determined to bring the whole force
" of his kingdom againſt her, and never
" ceaſe his efforts, till he had over-
" thrown the only part of the oriental
" empire which ſtill held out againſt
" the Ottoman dominion, and the reli-
" gion of his falſe prophet.

" The emperor Conſtantine in ſpirit,
" in underſtanding, in goodneſs of heart
" more dignified than by the purple
" veſtment, ſaw the adverſe prepara-
" tions

" tions of Mahomet through the thin
" veil of his inſidious profeſſions of in-
" tentional peace, and would have time
" guarded againſt his attempts: but
" alas! the Roman ſpirit was fled
" from his degenerate ſubjects, or eva-
" porated in religious conteſts: ſoftened
" by long peace, and enervated by luxu-
" ry, the nobles were incapable of ex-
" ertion, and by their puſillanimous, but,
" as they termed them, *prudent* coun-
" ſels, over-ruled the dictates of his
" ſuperior wiſdom, conſtrained him to
" yield to a torrent which he could not
" ſtem, and wait with unmanly patience
" the reſult.

" Such was the general infatuation,
" that the Ottoman was ſuffered, with-
" out oppoſition, to erect a fortreſs on
" the narrow paſs of the Boſphorus,
" which, in conjunction with one built
" by his grand-father on the other ſide,
" muſt—and it was impoſſible not to
" foreſee it—inevitably obſtruct the

" com-

" commerce, annihilate the very ſubſiſ-
" tence of the city; intirely exclude her
" friends, and give free and undiſturb-
" ed inlet to her enemies: yet it was
" ſuffered to be done, becauſe Maho-
" met, ſtill wiſhing to preſerve the *ap-*
" *pearance* of peace, condeſcended to
" attempt ſome excuſes for its erection.

" But this fortreſs completed, and the
" maſk of friendſhip no longer requi-
" ſite, it ſoon became evident that the
" ſultan ſought occaſions of diſpute:
" and though he found the patience of
" the imperial court almoſt invincible,
" he at length, by the moſt palpable
" affronts, reduced it to the neceſſity of
" reſentment. His conduct became
" openly hoſtile and deciſive; the au-
" tumn of 1452, cloſed upon Conſtanti-
" nople with the certainty of a ſiege in
" the ſpring; and the heavy, the diſ-
" mal enſuing winter was ſpent in pre-
" parations for it.

" This was the firſt anxious ſeaſon of
" my life, for hitherto my cup of felicity

" had

" had been as pure and unmixed as is
" conſiſtent with human life, and human
" nature. My wife, though years had
" impaired thoſe charms which had firſt
" endeared her to my heart, yet, by the
" long experience they gave of her me-
" rit and virtues, was wound more cloſe-
" ly into its innermoſt folds. My daugh-
" ter, in mind the tranſcript of her
" mother, blooming in perfect beauty,
" and the admiration of all beholders,
" was affianced to a noble youth. My
" ſon, courageous, high-ſpirited, yet
" gentle and courteous, in that ſpring
" of life when the boy emerges into man,
" gave promiſe of being as perfect in
" ſoul as he was faultleſs in form——
" My God!—and where are theſe dear
" ones?"

He claſped his hands in agony—his voice faultered—his limbs trembled, yet he ſtill continued to ſpeak, though in hoarſe and broken accents—" *All—all*
" torn from me—my Adelaide—Oh hor-
" *ror!* horror!— Yet—bleſt—bleſt that
" friendly

" friendly blow!—the dagger that pier-
" ced thy agonized breaſt, freed thy
" uncontaminated ſoul from thy polluted
" body, and left thee no tears to ſhed
" for the crimes of others.—No, my
" child, life to thee muſt have been in-
" ſupportable. —— My ſon too!—my
" helpleſs ſon! yet he *eſcaped* diſhonour,
" though at the expence of life—ſtabbed
" by the unnatural ſultan in the frenzy
" of diſappointed paſſion—my wife ſink-
" ing—expiring amidſt the complicated
" torments.—Oh, my God, how did *I*
" ſurvive that hour?—how exiſt, when
" every fibre of my bleeding heart was
" torn aſunder—every nerve of ſenſibi-
" lity tortured!—I ought not—'twas
" ſhame to live."

He threw himſelf on the ground in an agony of deſpair. The weeping Eleanor ſunk beſide him. She had no words which ſhe thought capable of conſoling ſuch ſorrows. Yet her ſilent ſympathetic tenderneſs was a balm more efficacious

cious to his wounded ſoul, than would have been the moſt ſtudied powers of unfeeling eloquence.

"How ſweet," ſaid he, "is the tear of "ſympathy to the unfortunate! Not al-"ways has it accompanied the recital of "my woes—but let me not too much "pain that gentle heart I meant to "amuſe, and, alas! I have afflicted thee. "—I intended to narrate the particulars "of that memorable ſiege to which I "was an eye-witneſs; but my rapid ima-"gination flew before, and anticipated "all its horrors, all its dreadful, its ex-"cruciating conſequences, which even "at this diſtance of time—for nine te-"dious years are ſince elapſed—neither "reaſon nor religion has enabled me "to look back upon with compoſure—"though well I know tears are unavail-"ing, and complaints are impious.—"Let us walk."

They went forward ſometime in ſi-lence, interrupted but by ſighs. At length

length the good father once more resumed his tale, though in a broken voice and tremulous accents.

" After having, in the general wreck, " loſt all that gave value to riches, and " charms to the faireſt city, the fineſt " country in the univerſe, poverty and " everlaſting baniſhment were but ſe- " condary, but trivial evils. I eſcaped " into Italy without a ducat in my poc- " ket, or decent raiment on my back, " without reſource, and without a friend, " habituated from infancy to affluence, " and breathing but in the exerciſe of the " ſocial affections. Every tie of coun- " try, of intereſt, of affection annihilated, " I, a ſolitary ſtranger, found myſelf " alone in the world, an atom in the vaſt " maſs of matter, too inſignificant for " notice: and the memory of thoſe eyes " which had once ſparkled at ſeeing " me—of thoſe voices that once in glad " accents hailed my approach, gave ad- " ditional anguiſh to the poignancy of

" neglect, added gall to the bitterneſs
" of poverty.

" Yet my mind ſtrove to throw off
" ſome of that load of ſorrow which
" oppreſſed it, and ſought by ſacred
" affinities, by holy friendſhips, to fill up
" the intolerable vacuum of my heart.
" With ſome difficulty I procured my-
" ſelf to be admitted into a monaſtery
" of Benedictines, received the tonſure,
" and felt a dawn of joy at being once
" more a member of ſociety, and ſalut-
" ed as brother by a community of pious
" chriſtians.—Alas! I diſcovered we
" were brethren but in name. Diſappoint-
" ed in the friendſhip, the fraternal af-
" fection I had fondly pictured in a ſo-
" ciety, where virtue and religion are the
" profeſſed baſis of union, man, ſaid I to
" myſelf, is ſo much the creature of ſenſe,
" that perhaps he needs a *corporeal*
" bias to incline his mind, and give the
" firſt ſpring to the more tardy attrac-
" tion of ſoul to ſoul: ſome accidental

" early

" early connexion is neceſſary to pre-
" pare the mind for the ſeal of friend-
" ſhip; or the partiality for kindred
" blood is requiſite, to give the firſt
" genial warmth to the ſeeds of affec-
" tion. I muſt ſeek in England, where
" my family has no doubt many rela-
" tions, what Italy will not afford me;
" there ſome diſintereſted heart, pre-
" pared by the ties of blood to aſſume
" the ſacred bands of friendſhip, may
" open to receive a deſolate wandering
" kinſman; pity for the unfortunate rela-
" tion may expand into affection for the
" man; and I may have again the un-
" ſpeakable felicity of being beloved by
" *one* perſon upon the earth.

" But in this expectation I was alſo
" diſappointed. It was not difficult, on
" my arrival in England, to diſcover my
" relations; but ſome rich ones, who had
" fattened on the ſpoils of my parents for-
" tunes, and fearing, perhaps, that I ſhould
" inſiſt on a reſtitution, treated me as an

" impoſtor; an idea the poorer ones rea-
" dily availed themſelves of: the cry
" was againſt me, for my own ſimple
" aſſertion was all the proof I could
" bring of my identity; and I ſhould
" have ſunk under the load of calumny,
" had not the ducheſs of Suffolk taken
" compaſſion on me. She found I was
" diſtreſſed, though ſhe probably did not
" believe my ſorrowful tale; and one
" of her ſuperintending prieſts being
" at that juncture dead, ſhe placed me
" in my preſent ſituation—a fortunate
" aſylum from the miſeries of indi-
" gence, the ſhafts of malevolence; and
" here, occupied in the pious offices of
" my ſtation, I endeavour to forget I was
" once happy!—Alas, the effort is not
" always ſucceſsful!—But ſee, from yon-
" der tuft of oaks aſcend the proud tur-
" rets of ſir Owen Fitzwalter!"

Our penſive travellers were, after ſome previous ceremonious delay, calculated to impreſs them with an idea of his dig-

nity,

nity, admitted into the preſence of the knight. Father Gregory informed him of the occaſion of their journey; and being empowered to offer liberally for the manumiſſion of ſo poor a cottage, and ſo ſmall a parcel of ground, was pleaſed to find he had not formed wrong conjectures on the ſucceſs of his embaſſy. Sir Owen's eyes, he perceived, ſparkled with pleaſure at the ſight of the gold, though his tongue held a contrary language, and proudly refuſed the leaſt diminution of his domain.

Overcome at length, as it were, by the *reaſonings* of the father, and his offer of holding the eſtate in fief, ſir Owen, after much diſcuſſion, agreed that Robert, by paying the offered ſum, ſhould enjoy the cottage and land free from all the ſervices of *pure* villanage, which are in their nature indeterminate, and arbitrary as to time and quantity; but was ſtill to remain in *privileged* villanage, whoſe ſervice is

determinate and certain: and which ſervice was at laſt reduced to, once in the year, preſenting to the lord of the barony a pot of honey weighing ſix pounds.

Robert was impowered to build, or make any alteration on the premiſes, without leſſening what was already there; but he was with-held from ſelling or alienating any part of the eſtate without the conſent of the lord, who ſtill retained the dominion and *ultimate* property. But it was in ſuch caſe provided, that if he wiſhed to transfer it to any other perſon, even to his children, that he ſhould firſt ſurrender it back into the hands of the lord, as its legal proprietor, and diſpoſer, who gave the word of a baron of England, and a true knight, that he would then inveſt that perſon with it, whom Robert, his vaſſal, ſhould point out, and who ſhould enjoy the grant of it in the ſame villanage.

The buſineſs thus adjuſted, Robert was ſent

ſent for to ratify in perſon the agreement made by his agents. The vaſſals of ſir Owen were aſſembled in the great hall upon the occaſion, as witneſſes of the tranſaction. For at that time, as the art of writing was by no means general, the evidence of property was chiefly repoſed in the memory of the neighbourhood, who, in caſe of any diſputes, were by that means enabled to decide the difference.

In their preſence, ſir Owen declared upon what conditions he enfranchiſed the cottage and land from the menial ſervices and ſubjections of pure villanage. Robert was inveſted with much ceremony with the freedom and property of it, under the before-mentioned reſervations. A feaſt, more magnificent than plentiful, concluded the whole. And the next morning our party returned, well ſatisfied, to their reſpective habitations.

CHAP. XIX.

BUT few days had elapſed ſince the preceding tranſaction, when one morning, after receiving ſome letters by a courier, the ducheſs informed her ſon that the counteſs of Richmond wiſhed to make her a viſit: "I ſhould," added ſhe," receive with infinite pleaſure "this amiable relation, did I not dread "the jealous eyes of York, who watches "every movement of her family with "malignant attention."

"You mean ſoon, madam," replied the duke, "to remove for a few months "to Donnington caſtle; receive her "there: it will give me an opportunity of "declining an interview, and by ſo doing "evade every dangerous conſtruction.

"You,

" You," added he, addreſſing himſelf to our heroine, " will be particularly " pleaſed with the caſtle, for it was the " ſeat of my great grandfather Chaucer, " and you will have the ſatisfaction of " ſitting under the ſhade of that favou- " rite oak, where he compoſed many " of his poetical pieces."

Alice approved her ſon's propoſition; and ſoon after leaving the room, Eleanor rallied the duke on the wonderful ſolicitude he expreſſed to ſhun a young and lovely woman, which ſhe underſtood the counteſs to be, and at the great care he took to preſerve his heart from her attractions.

" My great care," replied the duke, ſmiling at her pleaſantry, " is not ſo " much to preſerve my *heart* as my *head* " ſafe in its place, in theſe tickliſh times " when heads are worn ſo looſely. I " am perfectly aſſured of your pru- " dence, and will give you my reaſons for " the coldneſs of my conduct; but that

" you may underſtand it fully, I muſt en-
" ter into a dull genealogical diſcuſſion.
" My mother has informed you of the
" frailty of her great aunt, lady Swyn-
" ford, who, ſeduced by John of Gaunt,
" duke of Lancaſter, had by him three
" ſons and a daughter; which, on his
" marriage with her, he legitimated by
" act of parliament, and called by the
" name of Beaufort.
" The eldeſt of theſe, the *earl* of
" Somerſet, died young, leaving two
" ſons, John and Edmund, and a daugh-
" ter Jane; which Jane was the queen
" of Scotland, whoſe melancholy ſtory I
" have heard you recite. John, created
" *duke* of Somerſet, died young alſo, and
" without heirs male, ſo that his title de-
" volved on his brother Edmund; but he
" left a daughter Margaret, the lady who
" is now to honour my mother with a
" viſit, and who is the undoubted heireſs
" of the elder branch of the Beauforts.

" The

" The Duke of Lancaſter, by his firſt
" wife Blanch, had only one ſon, who, as
" you well know, aſcended the throne
" by the title of Henry the fourth; and
" our preſent Henry is the only ſurvivor
" of that *legitimate* offspring of Lancaſter.
" If then he dies without iſſue, the ho-
" nours of the family may, with much
" juſtice, be claimed by the remaining
" branch of that illuſtrious houſe, the
" Beauforts; who, though originally ſpu-
" rious, have, by the king and parliament,
" been declared legitimate; and can con-
" ſequently, by every known law, inherit.

" This was ſo well underſtood, that
" the preſent Henry, not having any
" child for ſome time after his mar-
" riage, Margaret of Somerſet was by
" many looked upon as heireſs of the
" crown: and the power and ſplendor
" of my father having unhappily in-
" curred univerſal envy and malevo-
" lence, it was made matter of ſolemn
" charge againſt him, that he intend-

" ed

" ed to unite me to her, though then
" ſhe was a child of but nine years old,
" and by the marriage acquire for me
" a title to the crown. He made it in-
" deed plainly appear, that nothing could
" be more falſe and groundleſs than this
" accuſation, for he had at that time
" affianced me to the co-heireſs of the
" late Beauchamp earl of Warwick; but
" now that Margaret is a widow, and I
" remain ſtill a bachelor, were we to
" meet, it would, by the enemies to
" both our houſes, be wreſted into a
" ſuppoſed reſumption of my father's
" original intention; and would probably,
" with a prince ſo jealous and vindictive
" as Edward, endanger the lives of both."

" As Henry has now a ſon to bar this
" lady's claim, would Edward perceive
" any reaſon of fear ?"

" Seated on a throne ſo unſteady and
" tottering, every trifle gives him occa-
" ſion of apprehenſion. Did he not hang a

" poor

" poor mechanic for a fooliſh jeſt? And
" does he not every day evince a deter-
" mination of ſnatching at the moſt
" feeble pretences to extirpate every
" adherent of the houſe of Lancaſter?"

" I can no longer blame your cold
" neglect of this lady, my lord; but
" your condeſcenſion in giving the rea-
" ſons for your conduct, has awakened
" in me farther curioſity: will you
" pardon me?—but why, after being
" affianced to the co-heireſs of War-
" wick, do I ſee you ſtill a bachelor?"

" The death of that lady prevented
" the marriage; an event which I will
" confeſs afflicted my father much more
" than myſelf, for ſhe was ſome years
" my ſenior, and by no means to my
" taſte. The houſe of Nevil was not
" inconſolable for it, for her immenſe
" fortune was added to her ſiſter's, who
" was married to a ſon of Saliſbury, and
" enriched him not only with her wealth,

" but

" but alſo with the honours of her fa-
" ther, for he became by his wife earl of
" Warwick. Margaret of Somerſet mar-
" ried, at fifteen, Edmund Tudor, earl
" of Richmond, half-brother to the
" king; for his mother, Catherine of
" France, with a precipitancy unworthy
" the widow of ſo illuſtrous a monarch,
" ſoon after his death wedded ſir Owen
" Tudor, a knight of Wales, by whom
" ſhe had the huſband of Margaret and
" another ſon, the earl of Pembroke."

Soon after this converſation, the duch-eſs removed to Donnington-caſtle in Berkſhire, taking our minſtrel with her, not only as an entertainment to herſelf and her expected gueſt, but alſo in a con-deſcending compliance with the wiſhes of Eleanor, who longed to viſit a ſpot conſecrated by the reſidence of the father of Engliſh poetry.

The caſtle was built in a much more light and airy ſtyle than is generally adopted in that kind of ſtructure; and

taſte

taſte and elegance appeared more conſulted by its architect, than ſtrength and defence. Its ſituation was peculiarly charming; for it was placed in the midſt of a park, on a boldly ſwelling hill, which gave the eye an extenſive range over a beautifully varied landſcape of hill and dale, woodland and lawn, interſected by the glittering wave of the Lamborn, a river, whoſe ſingular property it is, to fill its channel to the brim, in the fervid heats of ſummer, and decreaſe in its ſtream, as winter approaches.

With enthuſiaſtic rapture Eleanor traced the footſteps of Chaucer in this ſweet retirement, where, after a long attendance on courts, and experiencing all the viciſſitudes of fortune conſequent on the ſmiles and frowns of the great, he ended in peaceful and philoſophic ſolitude his days: ſhe delighted in the umbrage of that oak which had ſhaded with its foliage the venerable bard; and contemplated

templated with ecſtaſy his picture, which, drawn in the flower of his age, evinced him to have been one of the handſomeſt and moſt graceful men of his time; and which the limner had pourtrayed in ſo maſterly a manner, that in its eyes might be diſcerned that fire of genius which animated his works.

The ducheſs had been but a ſhort time at Donnington-caſtle ere the blooming widow arrived, with her beautiful ſon, the infant earl of Richmond, then about four years old. Alice received her with the cordiality of a kinſwoman, blended with reſpect due to her birth and rank. Our heroine was introduced, and by her lively converſation, added to her profeſſional excellence, had the happineſs of highly pleaſing the counteſs, as well as by her good humor and playful diſpoſition, winning the heart of the little Henry.

A few

A few days after her arrival, the counteſs of Richmond took an opportunity of their being alone together, to diſcloſe to the ducheſs the peculiar reaſons which had induced her to ſeek the interview.

" It was not, my dear madam," ſaid Margaret, " becauſe you were my *kinſ-*
" *woman*, that I was induced to in-
" trude myſelf into your preſence, but
" I was ſtimulated by a more impor-
" tant motive, for it was becauſe you
" had ever diſtinguiſhed yourſelf as my
" *friend*, and are enabled by a ſupe-
" rior underſtanding, and judgment
" unwarped by the narrow prejudices
" of any party, to counſel me wiſely,
" and direct ſafely my feeble unaſſured
" ſteps, in my dangerous walk through
" life. I am going to repoſe in your
" boſom the deareſt ſecrets of my ſoul,
" in full confidence they are there as
" ſafe as in my own; and I conjure you
" to give me, unreſervedly, your full and
" free thoughts concerning them."

The

The ducheſs made a proper anſwer to this ſpeech, and the counteſs proceeded.

" When ſir Owen Tudor was put to " death with ſo many circumſtances " of wanton cruelty by young Edward, " then duke of York, an indiſcreet " friend acquainted my huſband, who " was then in a very languiſhing ſtate " of health, with every inhuman parti- " cular; which ſo ſhocked his feeble " frame, that he ſurvived the dreadful " intelligence but three days, and his " laſt hours were embittered by the " moſt direful apprehenſions for the fate " of me and my child. Alas, my dear " Margaret! he would exclaim, my fa- " ther inhumanly murdered, for no other " crime than his connexions with the " houſe of Lancaſter; what ill have I " not to fear for thee, and for our Hen- " ry, ſo cloſely, ſo nearly allied? for our " child particularly, united by a dou- " ble tie to that unfortunate family?—

" Fly

" Fly with him, my dear Margaret—
" ſave thyſelf and him—fly from this
" inhoſpitable, this barbarous clime—
" ſeek refuge in the court of France:—
" its monarch will ſurely ſhield from ruin
" the helpleſs grandſon of his ſiſter.—
" Thus theſe dreadful preſages of fu-
" ture ills gave new horrors to death,
" additional agonies to the pangs of ſe-
" paration. He expired—deſpair ſeized
" my heart—the world to my affrighted
" imagination became a horrid deſart,
" and I, every hope cruſhed, every
" friend cut off, was, methought, with
" my dear infant, ſurrounded with
" glaring ſerpents, hiſſing to deſtroy us:
" —happily ſucceſſive faintings reſcued
" my ſinking reaſon, and preſerved me
" from inſtant diſtraction.
" After many hours, reviving but to
" faint again, my ſwoonings left me, but
" ſo languid, that my maids laid me,
" more dead than alive, on my bed, and
" my faithful Maud ſat weeping by me.

" A deep

" A deep and death-like ſleep ſtole in-
" ſenſibly over my exhauſted frame; but
" ſtill thoſe dreadful images, which had
" occupied my waking thoughts, pur-
" ſued me, and formed the baſis of a
" very ſingular dream.

" Methought, I was kneeling by the
" bedſide of my dead Richmond, and
" bathing his clay-cold hand with my
" tears, whilſt my little Henry ſtood
" beſide me, and by his infantine ca-
" reſſes endeavoured to aſſuage my
" ſorrows, when ſuddenly the door of
" the apartment was burſt open, two
" men with infernal viſages ruſhed in,
" ſeized my child, and ſaid they were
" deputed by Edward to deſtroy him.
" But, like a lioneſs, I flew on the wretch
" who held him, unclenched his graſp-
" ing hand from the throat of my
" darling, ſnatched the babe to my arms,
" half ſtrangled, its face black, its little
" eyes rolling in agony: I darted, like an
" arrow from the bow of a ſtrong archer,

" down the ſtairs, and out of the houſe.
" I ſtopt not, though I heard the in-
" human inſtruments of tyranny ſhout-
" ing after me, till I reached the co-
" vert of a thick wood, and in its deep-
" eſt receſſes ſaw the mouth of a cave,
" into which, as a place of refuge, I
" eagerly ran, threw myſelf on the
" ground, my ſtrength exhauſted with
" my flight, and indulged in the higheſt
" tranſports of joy, in having reſcued
" my child from death. When, me-
" thought, ſuddenly the dark cave was
" illumined with a ſudden blaze of
" light, and an aged hermit, of a moſt
" venerable and benign aſpect, ſtood
" before me. He regarded me ſome
" moments with an eye of melting com-
" paſſion, whilſt I attempted to implore
" his protection; but, methought, extreme
" ſurprize bound my tongue, and I was
" unable to utter a word: at laſt, in an
" accent of aſtoniſhment, he broke the
" ſolemn ſilence."

" Margaret of Beaufort here!" he

cried, " the deſcendant, and the *mother*
" of kings!—the favoured of Heaven,
" whoſe happy eye ſhall behold thy ſon's
" ſon ſeated in the peaceful throne of
" his father!—what ſeekeſt thou in my
" lonely cave?"

" I opened my mouth to ſpeak; but
" articulation was ſtill denied me, and
" I could only point with ſignificant
" geſtures to my ſon."

" Art thou anxious, Margaret,' me-
thought he ſaid, " for the fate of that
" infant?—ſtill the perturbations of thy
" ſoul, and ſee in his perſon an em-
" blem of his future fortune: for as in
" his azure veins flow in one united
" ſtream the diſcordant royal blood of
" France and England, *ſo* ſhall he
" happily in peace combine all the jar-
" ring intereſts of his bleeding coun-
" try—For ſee!—behold from afar, the
" feeble vine of ſinking York, twining
" its virgin tendrils round the ſtem of
" Lancaſter, and wreathed with the pale

" and vermeil roſe, aſcending together
" the clouds, crowned to remoteſt poſ-
" terity!—with Woden the race began,
" and ends not but with the world."

" He ceaſed; but his words, which
" my ears had eagerly abſorbed, infuſed,
" like a rich cordial, ſuch cheering, ſuch
" renovating hope into my inmoſt ſoul,
" that I awoke with ſpirits and ſtrength
" invigorated, and a heart diſburthened
" of half its woes.——Fain would I, my
" dear couſin, think the charming viſion
" prophetic, and that it was diſcloſed to
" me by the Father of mercies, in that
" moment of wretchedneſs, to reſcue me
" from deſpair and diſtraction.

" But, alas! there are moments when
" its ſalutary influence is ſuſpended;
" when all my Richmond's death-bed
" preſages riſe with Egyptian gloom
" around me, and envelop me in miſery:
" then, overwhelmed with the moſt hor-
" rid apprehenſions, I judge my dream
" but the caſual effect of a diſturbed

" imagination, ſtart at the idea of being
" led by ſuperſtitious regard to it, into a
" falſe and ruinous ſecurity, and reſolve
" to obey my dying huſband's admoni-
" tions, and ſeek refuge in another land.
" Long has my heart thus fluctuated
" between theſe conflicting opinions,
" without my judgment being able to de-
" termine which ought to direct my
" conduct. At length, I have flown to
" you to decide for me; you, my dear
" couſin, who are the only friend left
" me, in whoſe boſom I can ſafely thus
" unreſervedly repoſe the important ſe-
" cret of my hopes and my fears, to you
" have I flown for counſel; your wiſ-
" dom ſhall direct my bewildered ſteps."

" Alas, my dear couſin!" replied the noble Alice, " that I was but worthy
" your partial opinion of me! that the
" wiſdom which you ſo highly over-rate,
" could be found adequate to the taſk
" you aſſign it! As your faithful friend,

" I truſt

" I truſt you will ever find your high-
" eſt ideas realized; but, ah! how
" ſhort muſt the prudent counſellor fall
" of what is expected from her! yet, ſuch
" as they are, the beſt of my abilities
" ſhall be devoted to your ſervice. No
" human judgment can decide, whether
" your dream was or was not prophetic;
" but in either caſe my advice would
" be the ſame. Grant it prophetic—
" and I confeſs I am ſo inclined to re-
" gard it, for it does not appear to me like
" the wild incoherent viſions which are
" the caſual offſpring of a diſturbed ima-
" gination—yet as the ſhort glimpſe, the
" faint ſketch of futurity, which was af-
" forded you, appears to be penciled by
" the hand of mercy, to ſnatch you from
" the horrors of deſpair, but not in any
" manner to dictate to your conduct, fruſ-
" rate not, I beſeech you, the benevo-
" lent intention; diſcard from your mind
" carking care, and anxious ſolicitude,

" aſſured that you may reſt ſecurely in
" the protection of the Higheſt, fully
" truſting, that unerring wiſdom will ſe-
" lect the beſt time and means of accom-
" pliſhing its own decrees; and that om-
" nipotence can never be foiled in its pur-
" poſe, though every human power join
" hand in hand to oppoſe it. Wait with
" cheerful patience the event; content
" to act only as the revolutions of hu-
" man affairs ſeem, in prudence, and
" in conformity to the expreſs and
" known laws of God, to demand; and
" which, as at this time they point out no
" immediate danger to yourſelf, or your
" ſon, ſeem to imply, that you ſhould reſt
" quiet in the peaceful ſtation in which
" your noble Richmond left you, and not
" awaken ſuſpicion by unneceſſary pre-
" caution. For indeed, my dear cou-
" ſin, your apprehenſive and hurried
" mind, has conjured up hideous
" ſpectres of dangers, which at *this*
" time, can have no exiſtence. The
" jealouſy of York, however wakeful,

" will

" will never point its baleful eyes to-
" wards you, whilſt two perſons yet re-
" main of the legitimate houſe of Lan-
" caſter, Henry and his ſon. Should in
" ſome future time any accident befal
" them, *then* it will indeed behove you
" to act with caution, and guard yourſelf
" from its machinations, as the heir of
" the ingrafted branch; which, legiti-
" mated by the higheſt authority, will
" then inherit without diſpute all the
" claims of that noble family. Thus
" you ſee, my dear kinſwoman, whether
" your dream is prophetic or not, the
" ſame line of conduct ſeems drawn for
" you—you may at preſent reſt ſecurely
" in your native iſland, and ought not,
" by flying from imaginary dangers, to
" hazard the falling into real ones."

More at eaſe ſince ſhe had unbur-thened her heart, the counteſs, after this converſation, entered with cheerfulneſs into the parties which the ducheſs was

daily forming for her amuſement. Many of the nobility viſited at Donnington, among whom was the family of the duke of Buckingham, now high in the favour of York: and the ſecond ſon of that nobleman, a young and gallant knight, ſir Henry Stafford, became deeply enamoured of the fair relict of Richmond. Finding her cold and averſe to his attentions, he applied himſelf to gain the intereſt of the ducheſs in his favour; and Alice ſeeing for her kinſwoman great advantages in the alliance and protection of ſo powerful a family, exerted her influence over the mind of the counteſs with ſo much ſucceſs, that Margaret, yielding more to the reaſons urged with ſo much energy by the ducheſs, than the importunities of her lover, was induced at length to give a reluctant conſent; the hands of the amiable pair were united in the chapel of the caſtle, the marriage

riage was celebrated with great feſtivity; ſir Henry carried his bride a few days after to a fine ſeat of his father's; and the ducheſs, and our heroine, ſoon after returned to Ewelme.

CHAP. XX.

ELEANOR's firſt viſit, after her return to Ewelme, was to father Gregory. The pleaſure of their meeting was evidently reciprocal, and they walked together to the cottage of Robert, where ſhe found the father had been a frequent and a welcome gueſt. She was received there by the whole family with undiſſembled joy. She found the cottage had undergone all the intended repairs, and that her friends were very commodiouſly and comfortably ſituated in it, though with the plaineſt exterior, and without the leaſt oſtentation of wealth.

Yet, though every appearance of affluence was ſtudiouſly avoided in the houſehold of Robert, yet the very different

ferent circumſtances of the family were perceptible to thoſe who lived neareſt to it, and who had remarked its extreme poverty, without one humane effort to alleviate it. They obſerved that the cottage was enlarged as well as repaired: that there was a *chimney* was evident to the whole neighbourhood; and the utmoſt indignation was excited at this arrogant imitation of their betters. It was reported, that all the rooms were either paved with ſtone, or floored with wood; that *pewter* ſpoons, inſtead of wooden ones, were uſed in the family; and a woman, who had occaſionally aſſiſted in ſome menial office, aſſerted that the beds and bolſters were all of *feathers*, and all of them had *ſheets*. The beauty of Yolante had not been unobſerved amidſt the ſqualidneſs of penury, by ſome women, inhabitants of the village where ſhe frequently went to procure proviſions; though, in her tattered habiliments, they

regarded her more as an object of contempt than envy; but now that ſhe was ſeen, though ſimply dreſſed, yet attired with ſuperior neatneſs, her heightened charms awoke that moſt malignant of paſſions; which, aiding the reſentment every one felt, on perceiving a family, ſo low and wretched, aſpiring in their houſe and furniture, not only to the conveniences, but the *luxuries* of their ſuperiors, now edged their curioſity, and rouſed their utmoſt ſolicitude to trace the origin of this wonderful change.

To effect this ardently deſired diſcovery, there were not wanting among the neighbours of Robert ſome who watched the doors of his cottage, and obſerved all comers; and it was not long ere they had occaſion to remark that the ducheſs of Suffolk's minſtrel was its moſt conſtant viſitant.—This was ſufficient—he was young and handſome—Yolante was the ſame—nothing, they declared,

declared, could be more plain. The ſlanderous tale was buzzed, from cottage to cottage, with a thouſand added circumſtances, invented by ingenious malice to corroborate and heighten the ſuppoſed guilt, till at laſt it reached the family of the ducheſs.

The bronze which had been originally given as a diſguiſe to the complexion of Eleanor, ſhe had for ſome time neglected to replace as it wore off, though ſhe had ſtudiouſly preſerved the black tinge of her eye-brows and hair, knowing it was principally *their* change of colour which made the alteration of her countenance; her ſkin had therefore recovered its natural brilliancy; and ſhe was ſo very beautiful a figure, that Catharine, a favourite attendant of the ducheſs, became enamoured of her charms.

This damſel, who was neither young nor handſome, had by no means been ſparing in hints to our heroine of the

violence of her paſſion; and they were indeed ſo perfectly explicit, that the coy minſtrel, deſirous of being on terms of friendſhip with her, knowing the influence ſhe had over the mind of her noble miſtreſs, took care to keep at a moſt reſpectful diſtance to avoid an *eclairciſſement*.

This apparent blindneſs to her advances, and inſenſibility to her attractions, was matter of equal ſurprize and mortification to Catharine. She ſuſpected a prior attachment, and had every ſtep of our heroine watched. Her emiſſaries traced Eleanor ſeveral ſucceſſive mornings to Robert's cottage. This diſcovery perfectly coinciding with the reports which were now ſpread abroad, convinced her of their truth, and filled her boſom with rage and jealouſy.

Few days indeed paſſed, in which at one hour or other, if the weather was tolerable,

tolerable, Eleanor did not viſit the cottage. Her benevolent mind, which always delighted in the felicity of others, contemplated with peculiar pleaſure the happineſs of Robert's family, for ſhe exulted in it as her own work. Amidſt a thouſand painful reflexions, it brought balm to her wounded ſoul. "My life," ſhe would ſay, when ſighing at thoſe melancholy retroſpections which too frequently would intrude, "my life, "though eccentric, has been innocent; "and I have not exiſted in vain, "ſince the Almighty hath graciouſly "enabled me to render ſix human be-"ings happy."

But this dawn of pleaſure began to cloud. In her viſits to the cottage was comprized all Eleanor's real enjoyment: for though high in favour with the duke and ducheſs, ſhe was ſtill with them under a kind of reſerve, was obliged ſtudiouſly to adhere to thoſe diſtant

diſtant manners obſerved by an inferior to ſuperiors; which, though they were far from appearing to exact, ſhe knew could not be departed from without giving diſguſt. But in the houſe and family of Robert ſhe was perfectly at eaſe: a ſmile of ſatisfaction decked every countenance as ſhe approached, and ſhe largely partook the felicity which ſhe gave. Father Gregory too was often of theſe parties, for whom ſhe felt a tenderneſs, reſulting from eſteem and compaſſion, almoſt filial.

In her viſits ſhe had always diſtinguiſhed, with peculiar attention, the beautiful Yolante. Delighted with her converſation, ſimple, innocent, and ſenſible, ſhe took pleaſure in cultivating ſo amiable a mind—ſhe lent her books, and taught her muſic. But, unconſcious of the attractions of her own form, ſhe did not ſufficiently reflect on the ſeeming difference of ſex, or form an idea, that

whilſt

whilſt ſhe indulged the ſentiments of a pure and blameleſs friendſhip, the gentle and unſuſpicious heart of Yolante might imbibe the poiſon of a leſs placid paſſion.

But to the more experienced obſervation of Philippa, a thouſand ſymptoms developed the ſtate of her daughter's mind; and ſhe beheld it not only without anxiety, but with the completeſt ſatisfaction; for as ſhe aſſured herſelf ſhe had diſcerned a reciprocal affection in the minſtrel, ſhe delighted herſelf with the idea of repaying, by this eſſential promotion of his happineſs, ſome of her mighty debt of gratitude. Nor did a conſcious ſuperiority to the humble and dependant ſtation of the minſtrel, nor the pride of high birth, which ſhe eminently poſſeſſed, incline her to diſdain the alliance: but, fully ſenſible of all their importance, ſhe wiſhed the diſparity ſtill greater, that her ſacrificing

them might evince her ſenſe of the obligation ſhe had received.

Robert ſaw nothing of this; for though by no means deficient in underſtanding, yet was he deſtitute of that penetration of diſcernment, which developes, at one keen glance, the ſecret movements of another's ſoul; and his wife did not think it neceſſary to point his obſervation, deeming it better to be abſolutely ſilent both to him and Yolante, nor check, by a premature diſcovery, the ripenings of a paſſion, which ſhe promiſed herſelf would be productive of general felicity.

For ſome time ſhe had waited with a degree of impatience for the declaration of that paſſion, of the exiſtence of which ſhe entertained not the ſhadow of a doubt; and imputed the minſtrel's ſilence to the timidity of love, ever modeſt and apprehenſive where it is real; ingenious in tormenting itſelf, and

and fearfully raiſing imaginary obſtacles to its wiſhes, where real ones are not likely to exiſt. She was pondering on the beſt method of drawing him to a confeſſion, when ſhe was informed by ſome officious neighbour, of the malignant miſconſtruction which had been put upon his viſits. This determined her no longer to heſitate, leſt the calumny ſhould reach her huſband's ear; whoſe jealous honour might forget, in its wounded feelings, their obligation to the occaſion of it; but of whoſe concurrence in the union meditated ſhe was certain, as ſhe well knew his gratitude was as enthuſiaſtic as her own; and the next day, at the uſual time of the minſtrel's viſiting the cottage, ſhe took care to be alone.

Philippa received Eleanor with her accuſtomed cordiality, and took the opportunity, which ſome enquiries after

Yolante

Yolante afforded, of repeating their neighbours' malevolent miſconſtruction.

Surprize and indignation ſeized the ſoul of Eleanor; ſhe expreſſed her feelings with energy; and pathetically lamented the neceſſity to which this calumny reduced her of foregoing the only enjoyment her life afforded.

" But why," ſaid Philippa, in an affectionate accent, " why, if our ſociety " afford you that pleaſure which you " flatter us it does, ſhould you deprive " yourſelf of it, and us of the felicity " of ſeeing you?" Eleanor looked at her. " Ah!" ſaid Philippa, " that I " could penetrate the ſentiments of your " heart!—then my impertinent queſtion " would be unneceſſary—but tell me, I " beſeech you, and pardon my bluntneſs, " for the occaſion calls for the moſt unequivocal ingenuouſneſs, with ſincerity " tell me, do you love my daughter?"

" Love

"Love her!" exclaimed Eleanor, not reflecting on the inference—"It is im-
"poſſible to do otherwiſe—ſhe is the
"moſt amiable, the moſt charming of
"human beings."

Joy flaſhed in the eyes of Philippa:
"Bleſſed moment of felicity," ſhe cried,
"when it is given me to contribute to
"the happineſs of my benefactor! Yes,
"my dear friend," ſaid ſhe, ſeizing Eleanor's hand, and gazing eagerly in her face, to mark the riſing tranſport,
"I have the rapture to inform you, that
"Yolante loves—fondly loves you in
"return——"

Poor Philippa! what a diſappointment! Inſtead of the glow of delight which ſhe expected would overſpread the expreſſive countenance of the minſtrel, ſhe ſaw confuſion ſpeaking in her eyes, and embarraſſment poſſeſſing every feature.

The timid eye of Eleanor, conſcious of all the perplexities of her ſituation,

ſunk

ſunk under the indignant gaze of Philippa. "My God!" at laſt exclaimed the angry matron, "how have I been "deceived!" Eleanor endeavoured to articulate ſomething, though ſhe knew not well what to ſay; but the other impatiently interrupted her—"I want "no *words*, ſir, to explain your ſen- "timents, your *countenance* has done it "ſufficiently—Heavens and earth!— "yet perhaps I ought to be calm— "but my poor child, my loſt Yolante "—inſidious deceiver!—why, by every "attention, by a thouſand traiterous arts "did you ſeek to gain a ſimple and "unſuſpecting heart, and now caſt it, as "of no value, from you?—We owe "much to you, ſir, but I will dare "to tell you, that the mighty debt "is cancelled; you have reſcued us "from one miſery to involve us in a "much greater—Oh, my Yolante, my "[illegible]retched girl!"—a flood of tears

ſtopt

ſtopt her utterance, and gave Eleanor an opportunity of ſaying ſome ſoothing things.——"I would tell you," ſaid ſhe, "madam, all my ſtory, which will "exculpate me from your blame; but "I ſee one who will interrupt us: "give me then your promiſe, that "not a ſyllable of what has paſſed "at this interview ſhall tranſpire till "I ſee you again, which will be very "ſhortly."——She gained a reluctant promiſe, and took a haſty leave, as a man who came upon buſineſs entered. "Thus periſh," ſaid ſhe, as ſhe turned her ſteps towards Ewelme, "one by one, "all my earthly enjoyments!—when "will my haraſſed mind find its only "refuge—the tomb?"

In the warmth of her wiſhes to retain the eſteem of Philippa, Eleanor had haſtily determined to diſcloſe herſelf unreſervedly to her; but the interruption gave her leiſure to reflect; and the treachery

treachery which had been uſed at the convent darted acroſs her mind—perplexed, uncertain, ſhe knew not what it was beſt for her to do. "Oh! that I had "a friend of wiſdom, experience, and "honour," ſhe cried, "to whom I "might without fear unboſom myſelf, "and who would direct my devious "ſteps to the moſt prudent and ſafeſt "paths of life!—and is not father Gre-"gory ſuch an one?—If he is alone, I "will this moment inform him of all "my difficulties, and be guided by his "counſels."

Eleanor was near the hoſpital when ſhe formed this reſolution, and ſhe entered it. Father Gregory was at home, but he was not alone, for his colleague was with him, a man of as much loquacity as curioſity, and untaught by any refinement of mind or manners to repreſs either.

Eleanor

Eleanor, the moment ſhe entered, threw herſelf into a chair, for her haraſſed mind had extended its effects to her frame, and ſhe felt fatigued. Father Gregory ſaw ſomething greatly affected her: he gueſſed where ſhe had been, and what was the occaſion of her uneaſineſs, for he was no ſtranger to the reports of the neighbourhood; but as he was aſſured of her innocence, fancied he ſaw a reciprocal affection in the young couple, and that a marriage would end the ſcandal, he would not wound her ſenſible mind by the information.

Father Martyn had none of theſe delicacies; but found as much pleaſure in repeating the ſcandal, as in piouſly exhorting her not to give occaſion for it. Both parts of his converſation were equally diſguſting to our heroine: ſhe roſe with additional vexation on her countenance, and hurried out of the houſe.

She

She walked home as quick as poſſible, no other ſatisfaction occurring to her than ſhutting herſelf up in her own apartment, and contemplating, without interruption, the embarraſſments of her ſituation; but ſhe had indulged herſelf only a few moments in this ſecluſion, ere her chamber door ſoftly opened, and Catharine with light ſteps entered, ſhutting it as ſoftly after her.

This damſel, whoſe paſſion was not of that delicate ſelf-devouring kind which oppreſſes more gentle boſoms, wearied with giving hints which were never underſtood, determined to endure her painful ſuſpenſe no longer; ſhe knew the duke and ducheſs were engaged at cheſs below ſtairs, and that all the ſervants were variouſly occupied: ſhe had heard our heroine enter her apartment, and ſhe ſeized the golden opportunity of knowing at once her fate.—With very little ceremony, therefore, ſhe drew a chair cloſe

to

to that in which Eleanor was ſeated, and who was too much ſurprized and alarmed to move; and, without any delicate circumlocution, or timid ſcruples, came directly to the point, confeſſed in unqualified terms her love, made a tender of her hand and fortune in ſo many words, and left Eleanor no other reſource, than, after abundance of grateful acknowledgments for her partial opinion, to lament, in ſtrains of deep regret, that it was not in her power to avail herſelf of the offer of a happineſs ſo ſupreme and unlooked for, being moſt unfortunately precluded from doing ſo by a pre-engagement.

Catharine did not hear theſe excuſes unmoved; but it was not to tender lamentations, tears, or ſwoonings, that ſhe gave way: ſhe raved and ſcolded at this diſappointment of her hopes—"ſhe knew," ſhe ſaid, "for whom ſhe, a "*woman of conſequence*, was ſlighted,—for a

"naſty deſpicable beggar girl; but "ſhe would rout her from her filthy "neſt, and make an example of ſuch "wanton drabs, whoſe helliſh buſineſs "it was to inveigle young men into ſin "and wickedneſs."

Her rage having this free vent, ſoon exhauſted itſelf, and the fond fit of our *innamorata* returned. She ſolicited the love of the minſtrel on leſs ſcrupulous terms, and in a ſtyle which ſhocked thoſe ears ſhe wiſhed to charm; finding herſelf repelled, ſhe became ſo vociferous in her mingled ſolicitations and reproaches, that the ducheſs, who was that moment paſſing the gallery with her ſon, into a room ſet-apart for chymical experiments, heard the ſtrange uproar, and both entered.

The ſcene which preſented itſelf the duke thought diverting enough. The attire of Catharine was much diſcompoſed; her ſhriveled ſkin, the colour of old

old parchment, diſcloſed itſelf without reſerve; her artificial treſſes, of which ſhe had great abundance, had unfortunately fallen from her head, and diſcovered a bald and ſhining pate; and her features, never famous for ſymmetry, now diſtorted to tenfold uglineſs by paſſion, altogether formed a picture too diſguſting even for ridicule, had not this ſpectre repreſented itſelf as the object of amorous violence.

For the moment the ducheſs appeared, ſhe ran up to her, and in a ſcreaming voice accuſed the minſtrel in the moſt virulent terms. She added alſo, ſo many ridiculous circumſtances of the fury with which he had aſſailed her immaculate chaſtity, that the duke, ſtruck by ſome ludicrous ideas, could not reſiſt a violent propenſity to laughter.

Very different were the ſenſations of the ducheſs; her indignation was excited to an extreme degree.—In vain the

minſtrel proteſted her innocence—in vain called upon her to contemplate the object before them, and determine, by her ſuperior judgment, which part a young man was moſt likely to play, a Tarquin or a Joſeph. Her anger was not to be appeaſed; and Eleanor was commanded that moment to leave the houſe, and never more to enter it again.

This order was like a ſentence of death to our poor heroine.—At the feet of the ducheſs ſhe endeavoured to deprecate her reſentment, whilſt Catharine, by every art, ſought to heighten it, loaded her with obloquy, and mentioned in the moſt inflammatory manner her *ſcandalous amour* with the cottager's daughter, as a farther proof of a depraved diſpoſition.

This had all the effect her malice could wiſh: the ducheſs, deaf to all the proteſtations and petitions of Eleanor, reiterated in a louder tone her orders of inſtant

inſtant diſmiſſion; and our heroine ſaw no other poſſible method of preſerving an aſylum ſo deſirable, but inſtantly diſcovering herſelf. She roſe from her knees, "I will obey you," ſaid ſhe, "madam, in "all things, even in this moſt cruel of all "commands; but ſuffer me, I beſeech "you, before I depart, to have the honour "of ten minutes' audience in private—I "have a ſecret of the laſt importance "to communicate."

This requeſt the noble Alice with the utmoſt ſcorn rejected. Eleanor looked at the duke——"I dare hardly," ſaid ſhe, "my lord, requeſt your grace's ab-"ſence—yet, would you extend your "wonted kindneſs to me, how great "would be my gratitude!" The good-natured nobleman was leaving the apartment, but was ſtopt by an authority he never diſputed—"Son, I command your "preſence."

Obliged to make the declaration before him, Eleanor hesitated; a deep blush overspread her countenance: he contemplated with wonder her confusion, and expected, with a degree of anxiety, the result. After several times opening her lips to speak, and as often closing them again in silence, our heroine at last, in a low and timid voice, acquired just resolution sufficient to say:

"How highly I prize your grace's "esteem, I am going to evince, by the "importance of the sacrifice I make to "regain it, and invalidate this woman's "infamous charges; the sacrifice of a "secret which I never meant to divulge "——a discovery of who I really am. "Know then, madam, that I am no "minstrel—nor am I a man. But I am "the distrest daughter of a brave and "noble baron; constrained, on the un-"timely death of my father, to fly the

"abode

" abode of my anceſtors, and hide my-
" ſelf under this diſguiſe, to elude the
" perſecution of thoſe who ſeek my life
" and my honour."

Catharine's broad and ſtaring eyes ſunk with confuſion on the floor.—" You " may retire," ſaid the ducheſs to her; a permiſſion of which ſhe immediately took advantage. The duke approached with curioſity on his countenance—" If " ſhe is a woman," ſaid he to himſelf, " ſhe muſt be the moſt charming, the " moſt accompliſhed of her ſex."

" Pray madam, be ſeated," ſaid the ducheſs. " I ſhould have been more " agreeably flattered had this diſcovery " been made to a confidence in my " honour, rather than to neceſſity—and " you would then have been treated in a " manner more befitting your ſex and " rank."

" You, madam," anſwered Eleanor, " have been ever generous and kind, and

" if you and the duke will have the " goodneſs to hear my ſtory, you will " in it find my apology for not diſcloſ- " ing myſelf." They both expreſſed an eager curioſity, and ſhe recited to them every circumſtance of her event-ful life, except what related to her partiality, which ſhe deemed ſo criminal, for her father's murderer.

Her noble auditors liſtened with the deepeſt attention to the intereſting tale; and when it was ended, expreſſed the warmeſt approbation of her conduct, as well as pity for her misfortunes. They both aſſured her of their protection, and of the moſt inviolable ſecrecy; and the ducheſs propoſed her reſuming the habit of her ſex under a feigned name.

To this propoſal Eleanor acceded with joy; for intirely ſecluded from ſociety, as was the family at Ewelme, ſhe ran little hazard of diſcovery, and even ſhould ſhe be diſappointed, ſhe deemed herſelf

herſelf ſecure in the promiſed protection. Some rich dreſſes, by the command of Alice, were immediately prepared for her. She in two days preſented herſelf in all her feminine lovelineſs to her noble patrons, and was announced to the family under the name of Elizabeth Dacre: Catharine who, after much difficulty, and not till Eleanor had interceded for her, was reſtored to her miſtreſs's favour, was introduced, and ſincerely forgiven by her, and the utmoſt harmony appeared to reign in every breaſt.

But alas! deceitful was the appearance:—the love which Catharine had profeſſed for the handſome minſtrel, was changed into the moſt rancorous hatred for his beautiful ſubſtitute, whom ſhe could never pardon the diſgrace ſhe had incurred; and ſhe burnt with a deſire of revenge, which unhappily

it was too much in her power to gratify.

On the day of Catharine's extreme mortification, when ſhe had been commanded by the ducheſs to leave the room, and had ſo readily obeyed; actuated by an inſatiable curioſity, inſtead of retiring to her own apartment, ſhe paſſed into one which was adjoining to that of Eleanor, and divided from it by ſo thin a partition, that every word ſpoken in the one, might, ſhe well knew, by an attentive liſtener, be heard in the other. By this means ſhe was as perfectly acquainted with Eleanor's ſtory as thoſe to whom it was recounted; and was not long in determining, by a letter to St. Julian, to acquaint him where he might find the fair fugitive, and point out to him a certain method of ſecretly ſecuring her perſon.

Whilſt ſhe meditated this treachery, Eleanor, unconſcious of danger from her,

her, rejoicing in an event which had reſtored her once more to ſociety in her proper form, and placed her under the protection of people of honour, regarded her with a degree of gratitude, and loaded her with undeſerved civilities. Our heroine eſteemed herſelf peculiarly happy in her ſituation; the ducheſs was infinitely kind and gracious; the attentive duke ſomething *more* than polite: ſhe was attended by the ſervants with obſequious care, and ſhe congratulated herſelf on the agreeable change which a miſtaken affection had, though unwittingly, effected.

Nor was Robert's family forgotten;—knowing that Philippa impatiently expected her, the day after ſhe had diſcarded her male attire, the daughter of de Longueville, in her own lovely ſhape, tapped at the cottage door. It was opened by Yolante, who deeply curteſied to the ſtranger; and Eleanor paſſed for-

ward into the room where the family were ſitting.

All roſe at her entrance, and made the cuſtomary obeiſance, ſomewhat more obſequious than common; for it was eaſy to perceive, by the dignity of her air, as well as by the richneſs of her dreſs, that their viſitant was of a ſuperior order. She returned their civilities in ſilence, and ſat down—Yolante, who had followed her into the room, ſtanding at a reſpectful diſtance on one ſide. At length Eleanor caught her hand, and drawing her cloſe to her, "My deareſt "girl," ſhe cried, "do you not know "me?"

"Saint Maria!" exclaimed Yolante, "ſurely it is—no, it cannot be our "benefactor in the dreſs of a woman."

"It is, my Yolante, and in her *proper* "dreſs—and now, my deareſt girl, permit "me to claim that tender friendſhip "which can no longer diſgrace you—

"ſuffer

" ſuffer me to embrace, as I have often " longed to do, the ſiſter of my heart."

Yolante unaffectedly ſhrunk from her arms; her eyes ſunk on the floor, a deep bluſh ſuffuſed her cheek, her heart palpitated, and her whole ſoul was loſt in a whirl of inexplicably confuſed ideas.

Philippa ſtepped forward with contracted brow,—" You cannot ſurely, ſir," ſhe cried, " condeſcend to ſport with our " feelings?"

" Believe me, my dear Philippa," ſaid Eleanor, " incapable of doing ſo: I am " really what I *now* ſeem; you have " hitherto ſeen me in a diſguiſe I was " conſtrained to aſſume, to elude the " perſecution of a bitter and inveterate " enemy—and pardon, I beſeech you, any " vexation it may have occaſioned you. " And this dear lovely girl," added ſhe, taking Yolante's hand, and drawing her into a chair which ſtood near her own,

own, "will, I hope, pardon me alſo, nor "deny me the tender affection of a "ſiſter." Yolante reclined her head on the ſhoulder of Eleanor, and burſt into a paſſion of tears.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

A FEW days after the preceding interview, as Eleanor was taking an afternoon-walk in the park by herſelf, four men ſuddenly ſtarted from a cluſter of trees, rudely ſeized her, and inſtantly ſtopping her mouth to prevent her cries, bore her ſwiftly towards the road, where ſome horſes were waiting, lifted her upon one of them, on which ſat a man; and all rode off upon a full gallop. Theſe various movements were but the work of a moment, and our affrighted heroine was ſome miles from Ewelme before ſhe had recovered her firſt ſurprize.

The rough preſſure of thoſe ſtrong arms that encircled her, gave her a full aſſurance, that by no ſtruggle or effort could

could ſhe diſengage herſelf; prudently acquieſcing, therefore, in what it was impoſſible to prevent, ſhe offered a mental petition to that benign Power which had hitherto, in every danger, protected her; and with calmneſs and patience reſigned herſelf to its decrees.

The year was declining faſt into autumn; there was no moon, and they had not rode many miles before the day had cloſed upon them, and a night of pitchy darkneſs ſucceeded. Their pace, after the firſt few miles, had been gradually ſlackened, and now it became neceſſary to ride ſlowly and cautiouſly in roads by no means good. They conſulted together; all coincided in one opinion, that it was moſt expedient to ſtop till morning; a caſtle was mentioned to be near at hand, and the horſes' heads were turned towards it.

Pleaſed to find that for this night ſhe ſhould not be given into the power of

St.

St Julian (for to him ſhe had no doubt ſhe was going, though by whom betrayed ſhe puzzled herſelf in vain to diſcover), a dawn of hope cheered the mind of our dejected heroine with its promiſe that ſhe might find ſome opportunity of effecting her eſcape.

At length her conductors ſtopt, ſhe was taken off the horſe, and carried into a houſe, a light was ſtruck, with ſome implements for that purpoſe which the men had with them; two or three tapers were lighted, and Eleanor looking round, with aſtoniſhment perceived herſelf in the caſtle which had belonged to the father of Philippa.

She bleſſed the reaſons, whatever they were, which had inclined her eſcort to ſtop at this place, from whence ſhe had no doubt of eſcaping, could ſhe but be ſuffered to chuſe the room in which ſhe was to repoſe for the night.

She was now alone with the man who ſeemed to be the commander of the party, one of them being ſent off to the next village for proviſions, and the two others engaged in cleaning their horſes. She looked at him—his countenance gave but ſmall promiſe of any indulgence from compaſſion or tenderneſs of diſpoſition: his little fierce eyes ſcouled under the penthouſe of an overhanging forehead, and the additional ſhade of an enormous pair of ſandy eye-brows which met over his noſe; that noſe, which turned with ſcorn from a mouth, which extending from ear to ear, diſplayed a ſet of long black teeth, ſo looſe in the diſtempered and livid gums, that like the keys of a virginal, they danced at every motion of his tongue.

Yet this uncouth creature, as rough and boiſterous in manner as ugly in perſon, did Eleanor aſſail with a ſweetneſs, a winning courteouſneſs, and inſinuation

tion of addreſs, which he found wholly irreſiſtible; his fierce eyes twinkled with pleaſure, his wide mouth was diſtended ſtill wider by a ghaſtly grin, and he was put into ſuch perfect good humour, that he aſſured her of every reſpect and civility conſiſtent with the duty he owed his patron. That patron ſhe learned was, as ſhe had ſuſpected, St Julian, who he informed her had been diſabled by a fall from his horſe from attending her in perſon; from him ſhe alſo learned that Philip was with the king, near whoſe perſon he had a very lucrative and honourable employment—and ſhe found that theſe men had it in charge to deliver her into the care of the prioreſs of that convent, from which ſhe had formerly made her eſcape.

Affecting to be perfectly ſatisfied at her deſtiny, as their expedition was to terminate in a convent, for the prioreſs of which ſhe had the higheſt reverence,

and

and a general eſteem for the nuns, ſhe continued to charm her hideous guardian by her blandiſhments; and after the refreſhments were brought, ſhe cheerfully took ſome, and then eaſily perſuaded him to let her chuſe her own apartment. She walked up ſtairs for that purpoſe, led him, as if by accident, into ſir Philip's bed-chamber, declared *that* pleaſed her, and ſaid ſhe would look no farther.

Vere, that was the name of her guardian, looked round, and ſaw no other door than that by which they entered, and the one into the cloſet, which he alſo inſpected. He ſet a taper down, took his leave, ſaying he ſhould call her early in the morning; and faſtened her door on the outſide with a ſcrew.

Eleanor now exulted in her ſucceſs, intending, as ſoon as ſhe ſuppoſed the men aſleep below ſtairs, to aſcend into the treaſury, where ſhe deemed herſelf

ſelf ſecure from their minuteſt ſcrutiny; and where ſhe could ſafely remain, till, wearied of a fruitleſs ſearch, they ſhould leave the caſtle; unconſcious that the means ſhe had taken to ſave herſelf threatened her deſtruction, and that her endeavours to charm, had prepared for her a more terrible misfortune than any thoſe endeavours were meant to elude.

It is poſſible to pleaſe too much. She had rendered Vere ſo ſenſible of her attractions, that when he returned to his companions, her lovely image, in all its winning ſoftneſs, ſwam before him. Strong liquors were not omitted in the articles imported from the village. Vere drank freely. The idea of his beauteous ward mingled itſelf in every cup, and was oil to the kindling flame. He reflected on her enchanting tenderneſs of manner, on her great civility and attention to himſelf, and conſtrued them into a partiality in his favour.—The thought fired

fired him: he inſtantly determined to profit of his good fortune. He plied his companions ſo briſkly with liquor, that they ſoon fell to the floor in ſenſeleſs ebriety; he ſnatched a taper, and in a moment was in the apartment of our heroine.

Inconceivable was the aſtoniſhment and horror of Eleanor, when, without any ceremony, he declared the intention of his viſit to be to ſolicit her love. Again ſhe had recourſe to addreſs, and attempted, by aſſurances of future favour, to make him deſiſt; but his impetuous paſſions would not be reſtrained, and ſhe would have been deſtitute of all reſource, if in that dreadful moment, when every human ſuccour ſeemed far off, the phantom of St. Maur, which had before terrified her, had not again made its appearance.

This phantom, however, now evinced itſelf a material form, for it ſuddenly

ſnatched

ſnatched the ſword from the ſide of Vere, and buried it deep in his body.

Breathleſs, exhauſted, overwhelmed with a confuſion of ideas, the terrified and agitated Eleanor ſat on the floor, pale, ſilent, panting.

St. Maur approached to offer his aſſiſtance—he diſcerned her features—what raptures illuminated his countenance!—he threw himſelf on the floor beſide her, claſped her to his boſom, and, in accents of ecſtacy, cried, "am I "ſo bleſt as to reſcue *thee*, my Eleanor, "from the attacks of a monſter?"

She yielded herſelf to the fond embrace; her head ſunk on his ſhoulder, and a ſhower of tears relieved her ſwoln heart.

Bliſsful moment! too ecſtatic to be laſting! Reflexions baneful to it darted croſs her mind, and ſhe dropped from his arms.—He aſſiſted her to riſe. He guided her tottering ſteps to a chair, and kneeling

kneeling before her, detained both her hands, which he alternately kiſſed, and preſſed to his throbbing heart, whilſt ſhe continued weeping, and made ſome gentle efforts to draw them from him.

" We are not ſafe here, St. Maur," at length ſhe cried, " there are three " other men in the houſe beſides this " wretch."

" If you will truſt yourſelf with me, " Eleanor, I will conduct you to a place " of ſafety."

She roſe. He jumpt upon his feet, gave the taper into her hand, drew her other hand under his left arm, and brandiſhing the bloody ſword of Vere in his right, they ſallied from the chamber, walked ſoftly down a back ſtair-caſe, acroſs a narrow paſſage, into a remote parlour, in which was a cloſet, which they entered. St. Maur lifted up a trap door, very artfully concealed in the flooring, and aſſiſted Eleanor to deſcend a ſteep

flight

flight of ſtairs, after having ſhut down the trap door, and faſtened it with a ſtrong bolt within ſide. He then led her along a dark, winding, ſubterranean way, which at length opened into a ſpacious cave. St. Maur now cloſed the entrance of the paſſage into this alſo, and ſeating the trembling Eleanor on a ſtone, which ſerved for a chair, aſſured her that here ſhe might reſt ſecure from the intruſion of any human being.

He brought her ſome fruit, which he ſolicited her to eat. She made the attempt, whilſt he hung over her with looks of the fondeſt love.—She turned her eyes towards him, and met his ardent gaze.—She grew pale, and he fearing ſhe would ſwoon, claſped his ſupporting arms around her.

But ſhe ſtruggled indignantly from him—"Pollute me not, St. Maur," ſhe cried, "by your touch—by thoſe hands,"

added ſhe, ſhivering with horror, "which
"murdered my father!"

He regarded her with an eye of tender compaſſion.—"Your ſpirits, my dear "Eleanor," he cried, "are greatly diſ-"compoſed, a little ſleep will calm their "perturbations; ſuffer me to conduct "you to an inner cave, where you will, "I hope, enjoy the repoſe you ſo much "need, whilſt I, your faithful guard, "will watch here for your ſecurity."

More to prevent an accumulation of painfully conflicting ideas, than in hope of reſt, ſhe ſilently acquieſced. He conducted her into a ſmaller apartment in this ſubterraneous dwelling, and took his leave. She threw herſelf on the humble bed, to revolve the ſtrange incidents of this eventful day.

But her mind was in a ſtate of unutterable confuſion, her paſſions all at war with each other. St. Maur, whom ſhe ſaw

ſaw dead, ſhe found alive—the murderer of her parents, was her deliverer from diſhonour, and inexplicable to herſelf were her ſentiments towards him; ſhe owed him at once hatred and love; he claimed at the ſame time her revenge and gratitude.—In what light, ſhe aſked herſelf, was ſhe to regard him? or how conduct herſelf?

Loſt in an inextricable labyrinth, ſleep at length ſtole imperceptibly over the bewildered ſpirits of Eleanor; but the images it preſented were of as perturbing a nature as her waking thoughts. —Her bleeding father—her diſtracted mother—St. Julian menacing her *own* life—Philip revenging her wrongs on the guilty St. Maur. She ſees him wounded —falling—dying—and the agonies of her ſoul break the bands of ſleep.———

Pale was her complexion, and mournful the caſt of her eyes, when ſhe met St. Maur in the morning: he had prepared

for her a breakfaſt not inelegant, and ſhe was ſurprized to find a variety of the viands uſual in a morning repaſt, in ſuch a habitation.—" You are all won-" der," ſaid ſhe, " St. Maur," with a ſmile, half formed by her natural feelings, half repelled by cruel remembrance, " I ſaw you dead, I now ſee " you alive, I behold you ſecluded from " the world, with all the convenience " and comforts of ſociety."

" A very ſhort tale," ſaid he, " my " charmer, would elucidate every ſeem-" ing myſtery; but let me have the " felicity of ſeeing you partake what " you have the goodneſs to commend." She complied with his requeſt, and whilſt he beheld her with a lover's eye, he ſmiling, ſaid, " Your aſtoniſhment, " Eleanor, at *my* ſituation, cannot be " greater than mine, at perceiving the " daughter of the noble de Longueville, " ſeemingly unprotected, expoſed to the

" attacks of a ruffian.—I fear to enquire
" into circumſtances which may be pain-
" ful, but ſurely ſome great revolu-
" tion—"

She ſtarted up, fury flaſhing in her eyes—" Thou mayeſt *well* fear to inquire
" into circumſtances which thou know-
" eſt *muſt* be excruciating—into revolu-
" tions which thine *own* monſtrous
" wickedneſs and treachery have oc-
" caſioned."

" What mean you, madam?"

" Vile diſſembler! thy conſcience
" muſt render my meaning obvious—
" thou canſt not ſuppoſe me ignorant
" of thy guilt—a ſtranger to the *real* aſ-
" ſaſſin of my father?"

" My deareſt Eleanor," ſaid he in a ſoothing manner, taking her hand, " your ſpirits are yet diſturbed, your
" ideas unſettled, by the terrifying in-
" cidents of yeſterday; compoſe your-
" ſelf———"

" Doſt think me mad? Heavens and
" earth!—ſuch injuries are indeed ſuf-
" ficient to diſtract me—unhand me, vile
" aſſaſſin!"

" Aſſaſſin! of *whom*, madam?"

" Are thy crimes ſo *many* that I muſt
" point out thy *particular* guilt?—
" Of my father, wretch——"

" Of thy *father!* and *is* he aſſaſſinated?
" and am *I* accuſed of the crime? Oh,
" Eleanor! ſtill let me think it is an il-
" luſion of thy diſturbed imagination—
" that it exiſts no where but in thy diſ-
" ordered ideas."

" Oh, would to the powers of Heaven
" that it did not! but thou knoweſt
" otherwiſe—art conſcious that by the
" dagger of an hired ruffian, his noble
" breaſt was pierced to death—my diſ-
" tracted mother ſoon followed to the
" grave—and I, wretched orphan! driven
" by cruelty and avarice into a hoſtile
" world, without ſhelter for my devo-

" ted

" ted head, or protection for my inno-
" cence."

" My God! and am *I* accuſed of
" heaping theſe evils on thee? Oh,
" Eleanor! inſtead of piercing thy no-
" ble father's breaſt, the aſſaſſin ſhould
" have made his way through mine—I
" would have died in his defence.—Com-
" poſe thyſelf, and tell me how came
" theſe calamities loaded on my head?
" —In juſtice to me unfold, I conjure
" thee, if it is not too grievous for thy
" ſpirits, the horrid tale."

Thus called upon, the hope that he poſſibly might be innocent, gave her reſolution to recite the melancholy ſtory, and Eleanor began with his firſt miſtaken attempt; but here he ſtopt her ſhort, and an explanation enſuing, it came out, that St. Maur, eagerly deſirous of having an interview with Eleanor before he was called into the army, had written a

billet to her with an earneſt requeſt for that purpoſe; that he received a favourable anſwer from her, appointing to meet him in a little grove behind the garden, whither, at the appointed hour, he had flown on the wings of love; but that, inſtead of meeting the fair daughter of de Longueville, three men with ſwords drawn ruſhed upon him, one of whom he wounded, and made the others fly.—Fortunately, as a corroboration of his veracity in *this* part of his ſtory, he had preſerved the anſwer which he ſuppoſed he had received from Eleanor, and which ſhe no ſooner ſaw, than ſhe recognized the hand of St. Julian.

So clearly exculpated from this firſt charge, ſhe was better prepared to receive his aſſeverations of innocence in the next; for of his being entirely guiltleſs it was impoſſible to bring any proof. —" I own," ſaid ſhe, " St. Maur, I

" am

" am inclined to believe you; but the " charge is founded on probability—had " every *appearance* of truth."——

" ——And is my character *nothing*," ſaid he, indignantly, " when weigh- " ed againſt ſuch an one as St. " Julian? Oh, Eleanor! you know me " not, if you think me capable of an " action of ſuch dark villany, and your " injuſtice wounds my ſoul. How " ſhall I," added he, throwing himſelf upon his knees before her, " how ſhall " I make you believe that I am *not* the " moſt deteſtable, the vileſt, the black- " eſt of mankind? But, by the eternal, " uncreated Father; by his glorious Son, " the Saviour of the world; by the pure " ſpirit of the Holy Ghoſt; by Heaven, " and all the heavenly hoſt, I ſwear, " that I never in thought, in word, or " deed, injured your father."

" You conſtrain me to believe you—

" St. Julian then muſt have been the
" baſe perpetrator."

" It admits no doubt.—And am I
" reſtored to your good opinion ?"

" You are."

" And may I hope ?—Oh, Eleanor !
" tell me, may I preſume to hope for a
" place in your heart ?

She deeply ſighed. " Alas, St. Maur !
" you now ſee me, not the daughter and
" heireſs of a wealthy baron, but a
" wretched outcaſt ; deſpoiled of every
" paternal poſſeſſion, an unhappy de-
" pendant on caſual bounty—nothing re-
" mains."

" Yes, my Eleanor, all that is truly
" valuable remains — the ineſtimable
" treaſures of your perſon and mind—
" *with* them, oh, what a heavenly
" abode were this humble cell ! *without*
" them, the pomp and ſplendour of
" royalty were wretchedneſs."

" This

"This is not a time to talk of love, "St. Maur." St. Maur would not acquieſce in the juſtice of the aſſertion—he contended that a more proper one could never be found, and he not only perſiſted in the ſubject, but at length, by dint of importunity, drew from her a promiſe, that in ſome future time, when fortune ſhould look upon them with a more favourable aſpect, ſhe would be his.

For in informing Eleanor of the tranſactions of his life, it was diſcovered that the ſituation of St. Maur was in many reſpects as ineligible as her own. "The "intrigues and cabals of faction, and "the blind fury of battles," ſaid he, on her urging him to give her an account of his life—"are unpleaſant things for a "lady's ear, and it was my fortune to be "engaged in both. The firſt duty of a "ſubaltern is obedience to his ſuperiors "in command; I obeyed my patrons

" to the utmoſt ſtretch of my abilities, and
" was ſo ſucceſsful in ſome private em-
" baſſies to the oppoſite party, that I in-
" curred from St. Julian, who happened
" to diſcover me, a double portion of
" his rancour; and he, by ſome artful
" miſrepreſentations ſo irritated the mind
" of the duke of York againſt me, that a
" large reward was, by proclamation, of-
" fered any one who would carry him
" my head. This happened juſt before the
" battle of Wakefield, in which I met
" Philip. Mutual hatred ſtimulated the
" furious combat: I fell, but not before
" I had thrown my antagoniſt, as I had
" hoped, dead to the ground—yet he, I
" hear, is ſtill living, and ſome good
" angel drew me from the bloody field,
" and ſent my ſuppoſed dead body to be
" buried at Grafton. A letter which
" my conductor had in charge to give
" my aunt, he unfortunately loſt, or by
" that, probably, I might have diſcovered

" my

" my benefactor's name, my ignorance
" of which has given me a laſting re-
" gret."

" You may have that ſatisfaction ſtill
" St. Maur," ſaid Eleanor, with a ſmile:
—" but go on, I am impatient to have
" you reſcued from the dead." He looked at her a moment, and then proceeded:

" The rough movement of the vehicle
" in which I was placed, gave renewed
" motion, perhaps, to the impeded and
" relaxed ſprings of life; for we had
" not gone many miles from the place
" from whence we ſet out, ere the man
" perceived in me ſome ſymptoms of
" exiſtence. He ſtopt at a little inn, had
" me laid upon a bed, procured for me
" the aſſiſtance of a ſkilful leech, and
" nurſed me with the moſt unremitting
" aſſiduity for ſeveral weeks, during
" which I continued in a ſtate ſo weak,
" that my recovery was doubtful. At
" length

" length I acquired ſufficient ſtrength to
" be carried to Grafton, where I found
" my good aunt deſpairing of ever ſeeing
" me again; and with no other reaſon
" for ſuppoſing me living, than reiterated
" proclamations of reward for my head;
" for my invererate enemy, St. Julian,
" had irritated Edward as much againſt
" me, as he had formerly his father.

" My return to Grafton was therefore
" concealed with the moſt ſolicitous
" care; but as ſome of the ſervants, on
" my firſt arrival, were neceſſarily ac-
" quainted with it, I narrowly eſcaped,
" by their informations, from being de-
" livered up; for the political blood-
" hounds were keen on a ſcent, to which
" they were ſtimulated by avarice and
" inhumanity. I eſcaped by the fidelity
" of an old ſervant who loved me.—You
" know honeſt Lewis, he was originally
" of Weſtmoreland; he procured me the
" dreſs of an hermit, and conducted
" me

" me to a moſt ſecluded ſpot among the
" mountains of that romantic province,
" frequently viſited me, and brought me
" neceſſaries, and I lived long there in
" perfect ſolitude; though ſometimes,
" ſecure in a habit which is held by every
" order of mankind ſacred from affront,
" I rambled into the adjacent country.
" But in one of theſe rambles chance
" gave me a very agreeable companion
" in an aged hermit, whom ſome
" misfortune had driven from a cell he
" had long occupied; and my hours
" were much enlivened by his ſociety.
" But, alas! all the placidity which time
" had brought to my heart was in one
" moment diſſipated, and a new tempeſt
" of paſſions burſt over me, by the
" appearance of a minſtrel ſo like
" *you*, my Eleanor, that in my diſ-
" traction I could have fancied it your-
" ſelf——"

" Bleſſed

" Bleſſed Virgin!" exclaimed Eleanor, " and were *you*, St. Maur, the hermit in " that valley?"

" My God!" he cried, " and was I " *not* deceived?— how could I be ſo " ſtupidly blind as not to diſcern it was " really you? yet, captivated by features " ſo like the image engraven on my " heart, by a voice whoſe well known " tunings thrilled through my ſoul, " and woke every dormant paſſion, " what was my diſappointment in the " morning to find you flown! My com- " panion, with the moſt cordial friend- " ſhip, ſympathized in the ſorrow with " which he ſaw me overwhelmed, though " he was ignorant of the ſource, for I " had never diſcloſed myſelf to him; but " the valley had now loſt its charms, " every object became irkſome, I took " my leave of my companion, and re- " paired once more to Grafton. There

" I learned

" I learned that the inveterate malice of
" St. Julian ſtill purſued me. My diſ-
" guiſe, however, was unſuſpected, and
" my aunt, or rather Lewis, who was
" my chief counſellor, finding me averſe
" to return to Weſtmoreland, conducted
" me to this cave, which he accidentally
" diſcovered in the wood; and this place
" I have found more agreeable, as it is
" within one day's journey of Grafton,
" whither I frequently go for change of
" ſcene, and recruit of ſpirits, as well
" as of neceſſaries. The rock in which
" this receſs is formed, is excavated into
" ſeveral apartments. One day, ſoon
" after my arrival, the weather being too
" wet to permit my rambles in the wood,
" and my mind too unſettled for ſtudy,
" I amuſed myſelf with examining my
" habitation; and in the farther cell, to
" my great aſtoniſhment, I diſcovered
" a door, not unartfully concealed by
" ſome rude chizeling in the rock. With

" great

" great difficulty I opened it, purſued,
" though not without ſome apprehen-
" ſion, the long ſubterranean way;
" opened, with great difficulty alſo, the
" door which cloſed it at its farther end,
" and found myſelf in an uninhabited
" caſtle. Charmed with this diſcovery,
" as the dim light of my cave was very
" unpleaſant to me, I ſpent here many
" of my hours in bad weather, where I
" could enjoy the cheering face of day,
" and frequently ſlept there——"

" And there," ſaid Eleanor, " in one
" of *my* rambles, I believed I ſaw your
" ghoſt."

" And was it *you*, my angel, whom
" one night I ſaw ſleeping in the bed I
" generally occupied? Alas, my Eleanor,
" what muſt have been your ſufferings!
" —what the dire neceſſity that could
" drive the child of fond indulgence into
" ſuch lodgings, at ſuch a ſeaſon! I
" am burning to hear your ſtory."

Eleanor

Eleanor gratified his curioſity; and the countenance of her lover, like the face of the heavens in a ſpring morning, where alternately cloud and ſunſhine chaſe each other in rapid ſucceſſion, varied in ſympathetic harmony with her different ſituations. He now learned the name of the beneficent minſtrel, Fronſac, and his gratitude was unbounded.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

SCRUPULOUSLY nice, Eleanor could not ſupport the idea of living in this ſolitary cell with her lover; and the delicate affection of St. Maur, that ſought no gratification at the expence of propriety, pointed out Grafton as a proper aſylum for her, and where he was confident ſhe would meet with a cordial reception.

The propoſition was highly pleaſing to our heroine, and, wrapt up in ſome homely weeds, which in his hermit's habit St. Maur had borrowed at a cottage, and, ſupported by her lover, ſhe took her way to that place; and they arrived under the garden wall of ſir Richard Wodeville, near the cloſe of the ſecond day.

For

For his more commodious and private entrance, whenever St. Maur thought it expedient to viſit Grafton, he was furniſhed with the key of a gate, which led from the garden into the fields; and by its aſſiſtance, he was enabled to introduce Eleanor into a ſummer-houſe, where he left her, whilſt he went to reconnoitre, and privately find out his friend Lewis.

Whilſt he was thus employed, Mary entered the garden, and came into the ſummer-houſe, to look at ſome tender plants, which ſhe had ſheltered there from the chilling blaſts of autumn. Our heroine was penſively ſitting at a ſmall table, her head reclining on her ſnowy hand. She gently raiſed her eyes to ſee who was entering—ſhe ſtarted up, and ſprang forward to embrace her friend, who, ſcreaming, thinking ſhe had ſeen a ghoſt, fell half fainting into her arms. Mutual congratulations ſucceeded the firſt rapturous flutters of their interview.

St.

St. Maur and Lewis ſoon joined them, and Mary ran off to inform the ducheſs of the arrival of ſo intereſting and unexpected a gueſt.

The mind of Jaqueline had been humbled and ſoftened by misfortunes.—The active part which ſir Richard and his ſons had taken on the ſide of the unfortunate Henry, had rendered them obnoxious to the family on the throne. Their actions were watched with a jealous and malignant eye; they were thwarted in all their views; and the huſband of Elizabeth having fallen at the laſt battle of St. Alban's, his eſtates were confiſcated, and ſhe had returned, diſconſolate, and impoveriſhed, with three ſmall children, to her father's houſe.

All her towering hopes, her high raiſed expectations, blaſted by the fatal termination of the war in favour of York, the ducheſs of Bedford became capable of that real ſympathy for the diſtreſſes of others,

others, of which before ſhe had only occaſionally put on the ſoft and blandiſhing ſemblance. Eleanor was received by her with real tenderneſs.—Sir Richard was ever complaiſant to the wiſhes of his wife. The young ladies were in raptures at embracing the companion of their childhood. She found them all lovely and graceful women. Elizabeth, if poſſible, more beautiful and attractive, than when as bride-maid, four years before, ſhe had attended her to the altar with ſir John Grey, of Groby; and the three ſons handſome in perſon, poliſhed in manner, and with highly cultivated underſtandings.

In a general council it was agreed, that a change of name was all that was requiſite for the concealment of Eleanor from St. Julian, near as they reſided to him; the families not having any connexion whatever, the Grafton family living in the utmoſt ſeclusion, and every ſervant

ſervant but Lewis being changed, on the meditated treachery againſt St. Maur.

That faithful lover, happy in having placed the daughter of De Longueville in ſecurity, tired of his inglorious way of life, determined to repair to the queen in France, who was there ſoliciting aid to enable her to make one more effort to regain the throne; and it was generally imagined, that early in the ſpring, ſhe would be enabled to land in England, which if ſhe could do, her whole depreſſed party flattered themſelves that great multitudes would fly to her ſtandard, diſguſted with the ſanguinary principles of the preſent government. But at any rate, St. Maur thought, that let *her* fortune be what it would, *his* could not be rendered worſe. He took a tender leave, and reached Margaret in ſafety.

Eleanor paſſed the winter in as agreeable a manner as was poſſible in her preſent

preſent circumſtances; ſhe was treated by the ducheſs and ſir Richard with paternal tenderneſs, and by their children with fraternal affection.

Early in the ſpring, Margaret once more entered England, but it was to experience the utter annihilation of her hopes. After ſome ſkirmiſhes, in which her troops were unſucceſsful, ſhe was finally cruſhed at the fatal battle of Hexham; for her army was totally broken and routed, and all the nobles who had ſtill adhered to her intereſt, either loſt their lives in the field, or leſs glorioufly on the ſcaffold: and ſhe, deſerted of all the world, flying with her young and amiable ſon into the ſhades of a foreſt, was ſurrounded by a gang of banditti, and deſpoiled of all her gold and jewels. But the robbers, quarrelling in the diviſion of their booty, fortunately gave her an opportunity of eſcaping from greater evils. Whilſt ſhe, wandering in the dark, bewildered in

the mazes of the foreſt, hungry, penny-leſs, fatigued, and wretched, paſſed the diſmal night; and at the dawn of day perceived one of the banditti coming towards her with a ſword drawn in his hand.

The unhappy queen ſaw no means of eſcape. Her knowledge of the human heart was great, and her preſence of mind admirable; ſhe took the hand of the prince, and boldly led him towards the robber: "Here, my friend," ſhe cried, "I place under your protection "the ſon of your king."

Struck with pity for royalty in ſuch diſtreſs—charmed with the confidence repoſed in him, this man, in whoſe heart nature had implanted the moſt noble principles, which a vicious courſe of life had obſcured, but not eradicated, felt them revive to new life at this addreſs.

With

With a bent knee he accepted the ſacred truſt, conducted the queen and prince to a cave, known only to himſelf, and brought them refreſhments after their extreme fatigue. Here they lived ſome time, their faithful guardian ſupplying them daily with proviſions, and watching nightly the ſecurity of their repoſe. By him they were at laſt conducted to the ſea ſide, where he had procured a ſmall veſſel to be ſtationed to receive them, which landed them in Flanders, from whence Margaret paſſed to her father's court, where ſhe many years reſided, a memento of the mutability of earthly grandeur.

Henry was not ſo fortunate; conveyed by ſome of his friends into Lancaſhire, he there remained concealed about a year; but being at length diſcovered, he was delivered up to Edward, and impriſoned in the Tower. It was to the extreme contempt in which they held his

talents, that Henry was indebted for his life, not to the clemency of the king or his council; for the moſt ſanguinary meaſures in every other inſtance were invariably adhered to; and the unhappy Lancaſtrians having, by this laſt unſucceſsful inſurrection, incurred afreſh the diſpleaſure of Edward, were made to feel the full weight of his wrath: confiſcations, impriſonments, executions cruſhed them to the earth. It was ſeldom that any form of law was obſerved in their deſtiny; but even when reſorted to, it was made ſubſervient to the pleaſure of the monarch; convenience took place of equity, and revenge of juſtice.

St. Maur was in the train of Margaret when ſhe viſited England: in the battle of Hexham he had again encountered his old adverſary Philip; they were parted however by a concourſe of combatants when each had received a trifling wound; and after the battle, when he found the queen

queen was ſo completely defeated, that it was impoſſible again to aſſemble her ſcattered troops, he eſcaped into Weſtmoreland, and once more aſſuming his hermit's attire, rejoined his ancient companion in the ſecluded valley, not daring to return to Grafton, leſt he ſhould involve the family there in his own misfortunes, though he found means to acquaint them with his fate, and in a ſhort time Lewis was ſent to viſit him—but the kindneſs was fatal to St. Maur; for his reſtleſs and indefatigable enemy, whoſe emiſſaries continually watched every moment at Grafton, followed Lewis, at a guarded diſtance, through all the length of country from Northamptonſhire to Weſtmoreland, and not only diſcovered his retreat, but alſo that he had a companion.

St. Julian received the intelligence with diabolical joy, diſpatched a truſty band to bring him and his companion to

Longueville caſtle, taking for granted, that if that companion was the friend of St. Maur, he muſt be an enemy to himſelf: forgetting that unfortunate youth had upon no occaſion evinced himſelf *his* enemy, that the irreconcileable hatred ſubſiſted but in his *own* breaſt, and originated in the conſcious guilt of having done him the moſt eſſential injuries.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

WHILST our heroine, with her hoſpitable friends, were exulting at the pleaſing accounts which Lewis had brought them of St. Maur, St. Julian, who was exulting alſo, though from a far different ſentiment, in the proſpect of glutting his malicious ſoul by the deſtruction of the gallant youth, had his pleaſure heightened by the intelligence, that Edward was approaching with a hunting train, and intended him the honour of making Longueville caſtle his reſidence; and few were the hours which St. Julian had to prepare for his reception, ere his royal gueſt arrived, attended by Philip, and the earl of Kent, eldeſt ſon of that lord Grey, of Ruthin,

whoſe deſertion loſt Margaret the victory at the battle of Northampton; and ſome other noblemen. The plan for their diverſion was ſoon adjuſted, and the next morning the hills around the caſtle echoed the enlivening notes of the horn, the cries of the dogs, and the ſhouts of the ſportſmen.

Tranſported with the honour conferred by this royal viſit, rejoicing in his own proſperous fortune, and that of a ſon whom he adored, aſſuring himſelf of ſtill more exquiſite delight from the deſtruction of one whom his ſoul hated, St. Julian proudly rode forth, and looking round on the youthful and joyous train, in his heart challenged the world to produce a happier being than himſelf.

Alas, how frail is the tenure of earthly felicity! Philip, eager, daring, imprudent, forced his horſe over an enormous fence, which the creature was not able to clear: he tumbled on his impetuous rider,

rider, who was cruſhed in ſo dreadful a manner, as to leave little hopes of his life.

Thus vaniſhed the ſunſhine in St. Julian's breaſt; yet he inſiſted upon Edward's continuing his diverſion, whilſt himſelf followed his inſenſible and bleeding ſon, a ſad mourner, to his chamber. The moſt ſkilful leeches in the neighbourhood were ſent for; and at the ſame time a meſſenger on the fleeteſt horſe was diſpatched, by Edward's deſire, to London, for his own ſurgeon.

Whilſt the heart of St. Julian was alternately elevated with hope, or depreſt by the moſt direful apprehenſions for the fluctuating ſtate of his ſon, he notwithſtanding, by his importunities, conſtrained the king, whoſe regard for Philip was great, and his concern for the ſad accident extreme, to continue the amuſement of the chace; and more to oblige the diſtreſt father, whom he com-

paſſionated, than to pleaſe himſelf, Edward every morning followed his hounds.

It happened, a very few mornings after, that the object of their purſuit took its way through the grounds belonging to ſir Richard Wodeville; but Edward's horſe falling ſuddenly lame, he, with Kent, who was his particular friend and confident, were left far behind, juſt as they came in ſight of the houſe. Kent had been there with his father, who was a relation of the bridegroom, at the marriage of Elizabeth, and ſtill retained in his heart the image of her ſiſter Anne.

"That is a good looking houſe," ſaid Edward, "who lives there?"

"There," anſwered Kent, "lives "Jaqueline, of Luxemburg, widow of "the regent duke of Bedford, but now "married to ſir Richard Wodeville, by "whom ſhe has a family of the moſt "beautiful daughters I ever ſaw. I was,

"a few

" a few years ago at the wedding of the
" eldeſt——"

" And have not yet forgotten the at-
" tractions of the reſt!—ha, Kent! Is it
" your wiſh to take another view of the
" charmers?—ſhall we call?"

" I confeſs it would give me infinite
" ſatisfaction."

" We will do it then. I will pay my
" reſpects to the ducheſs—her rank,
" perhaps, requires it of me."

They rang at the gate—the porter came. Kent announced the king, with his intention of viſiting the ducheſs. The whole houſe was in commotion at the aſtoniſhing intelligence. The king was uſhered in by the gaping ſervants, and the noble Jaqueline immediately appeared, to charm Edward with the grace of her deportment, and the ſpirit of her converſation.

Kent reminded the ducheſs of his former viſit; and this led the converſation

to the preſent diſtreſsful ſituation of the *then* happy bride, with which, in a few words, ſhe acquainted her royal gueſt; then ſuddenly riſing, ſhe went out, and immediately returned, leading in Elizabeth, who, falling at her ſovereign's feet, implored, with tears ſtreaming down her lovely cheeks, his compaſſion for her helpleſs and impoveriſhed children.

The voluptuous Edward could not behold ſo many charms unmoved: he raiſed her from her humble poſture, aſſured her of the free reſtitution of her huſband's wealth, and ſeating her beſide him, requeſted to be informed, in what elſe he could gratify her.

Tranſported with this unexpected happy turn in her affairs, the beautiful widow dried up her tears, joy flushed her cheek with a richer carmine, lighted up her eyes with additional brilliancy,

and animated her converſation with a ſpirit it had long been a ſtranger to. The youthful monarch gazed and liſtened delighted; and his ſenſual and inconſtant heart, which had often dignified the groſſeſt of all paſſions with the name of love, now, for the firſt time, became ſenſible of that pure and permanent affection.

As he rode ſlowly towards Longueville caſtle, Edward entertained his companion with the perfections of lady Grey, though he found him ſomewhat diſappointed at not being permitted a ſight of his admired Anne. The king promiſed to repeat his viſit, as much to gratify his friend's wiſhes as his own: but well knowing how rancorous was the hatred ſubſiſting between the chiefs of the oppoſite factions, he ſtrictly interdicted any one, particularly St. Julian, being made acquainted with them.

On

On their arrival, they found their hoſt in much higher ſpirits than they had left him in: his ſon he fancied much better, and St. Maur had, ſince their departure, been brought priſoner to the caſtle. His aſſociate had fallen ſick upon the road, and had been left under a ſufficient guard, with orders to bring him to the ſame place as ſoon as he was in a capacity for travelling.

As Edward, who had never ſeen St. Maur, had no other animoſity to him, than aroſe from the repreſentations of St. Julian, he was not in ſuch violent haſte for his trial and execution as was that rancorous chief, but occupied by his new paſſion, could not be prevailed upon to attend that day to any buſineſs; and St. Julian was obliged, though very reluctantly, to poſtpone the gratification of his baneful deſires till the king was more actively diſpoſed. Grief had not

ſoftened

ſoftened the ferocity of his nature; but, on the contrary, his ſpirit, ſtill more embittered by it, ſought to wreak its impious indignation againſt Heaven, which had interpoſed ſo diſaſtrous a diſappointment to the fondeſt and deareſt of his hopes.

The next morning the king, with his favourite Kent, ſet out again with the hounds; but quickly were they ſuffered to run off, followed by the reſt of the train, while the two *inamorati* lagged behind, and then turned their horſes' heads towards Grafton.

The extreme attention of Edward to her daughter, was not unremarked by Jaqueline; her ambition preſented ſome pleaſing viſions. She had foreſeen a repetition of the viſit, and, with all the appearance of a negligent and unornamented dreſs, Elizabeth, by her advice and direction, appeared in a deſhabille, ſo calculated to ſet her off to advantage,

that

that Edward, connoiſſeur as he was in female beauty, thought he had never before beheld a form and face ſo lovely; never before ſuch elegance and refinement of manners. He became more deeply enamoured, and the adamantine fetters of permanent love were unreſiſtingly riveted on his ſoul.

Sir Richard Wodeville and his ſons were now introduced, and found it no difficult matter to gain the pardon of their clement ſovereign for appearing ſo often in arms againſt him: the daughters next, by Edward's particular deſire, to gratify his friend, appeared. Kent, with the raptures of a long abſent lover, approached the lovely Anne; and the king was aſtoniſhed at the ſingular beauty which pervaded the whole family.

The little cherubs of lady Grey were alſo brought in, to liſp their thanks to the king, for his peculiar grace to them. Edward careſſed them with the utmoſt tender-

tenderneſs, and imprinted on their roſy lips, thoſe kiſſes which he ſighed to transfer to their beauteous mother.

Eleanor did not appear, for ſhe was much indiſpoſed by a cold; and by ſome ſtrange fatality, St. Maur was utterly forgotten. This was recollected at the moment of the king's departure; but as all thought him ſecure in his northern vale, this want of memory was not regretted, as from the king's evident partiality, there was no doubt of having many opportunities of remedying the omiſſion.

How different would have been their feelings could they have known the imminent danger which hung over the head of that youth! For the moment the king had dined, St. Julian brought to him a written order for his execution, which, ſpreading on the table before Edward, and preſenting him with a pen dipt in ink, he requeſted him to ſign.

It was ſeldom that monarch heſitated on ſuch occaſions, but whether the vicinity of the ducheſs of Bedford's family might make him think the ſanguinary action might reach it, and prejudice the fair widow againſt him; or whether his ferocious, and hitherto ruthleſs heart, was ſoftened by the paſſion it had ſo recently imbibed; whatever it was that dictated his conduct in this inſtance, the whole company opened their eyes to the broad ſtare of wonder, when he declared himſelf wearied of proſcriptions and executions; and ſaid, that he could not be ſo unjuſt as to ſign a ſentence of death againſt any man who had not firſt been condemned by the law.

St. Julian repreſented that he had been, in fact, condemned, both by his father and himſelf, when a price was ſet upon his head for his treaſonable practices againſt them both. At laſt, ſaid the king, not pleaſed at his importunity, "It is but

"juſtice

" juſtice before we condemn him, to hear " what he has to ſay in his own defence. " —I will examine him myſelf, and if I " find he deſerves his death, he ſhall then " meet it.—An hour hence let him be " prepared to ſee me in another apart- " ment."

With infinite reluctance St. Julian obeyed an order which he did not dare to diſpute. At the time appointed, the king went into the room, into which St. Maur was led as a priſoner; and aſtoniſhed at his handſome face, his graceful figure, and dignified deportment, he felt himſelf inclined to hear, with unwonted complacency, what he could plead in his own juſtification.

Aſſuming, however, the awful brow of an angry monarch: " What had I " done," ſaid he, " young man, to ren- " der thee ſo bitterly mine enemy, that " thou ſhouldſt draw thy ſword and ex-

" ert

" ert thy talents with ſuch peculiar in-
" veteracy againſt me?"

" Perſonal animoſity, my liege, I
" could not have; but I drew my ſword
" in that cauſe in which my deareſt
" friends were embarked; and I deemed
" it my indiſpenſible duty to exert my
" utmoſt abilities in its defence."

" Of what family are you?"

" I am nephew to the ducheſs of Bed-
" ford, my liege, a ſon of her ſiſter,
" whoſe huſband, in France, attaching
" himſelf to the arms of England, died
" fighting its battles, under your noble
" father the duke of York, when he was
" regent there. Left an infant orphan,
" the ducheſs, with unexampled kindneſs,
" received me, and educated me as her
" ſon. Bred thus in her houſe with true
" maternal care, her prejudices, her af-
" fections were mine—too young to
" weigh the juſtice of either cauſe,

" equally

" equally a ſtranger to the perſon of " Henry and the duke of York, I had " neither partiality nor diſlike to the " one or the other—the choice of my " friends directed me to my ſtandard, " and the royal Edward, the braveſt, the " moſt gallant of mankind, would him- " ſelf have been the firſt to condemn an " inactive conduct there."

" You plead your cauſe well, young " man—I will ſee the ducheſs of Bed- " ford—till then, you muſt remain in " cuſtody."

St. Maur withdrew with a graceful air, and left Edward equally charmed with his perſon and his ſpirit; who congratulated himſelf that he had not, by a precipitate condemnation of this young man, incurred the hatred of the Wodevilles.

The next morning, under pretence of hunting, Edward, accompanied by his confidant, renewed his viſit at Grafton, and,

and, to his infinite joy, found lady Grey by herſelf. A look from the king diſcloſed his wiſhes to Kent, who was ſeized with a ſudden deſire of ſpeaking to the ducheſs, and left the room avowedly for that purpoſe.

Edward now declared his paſſion, and pleaded it with that ſoft ſeductive eloquence, which had hitherto never been unſucceſsful. But in vain were now his tender blandiſhments, his alluring promiſes, his ardent vows of everlaſting fidelity; the virtue of Elizabeth was inflexible—"I will hear no more, my liege," at laſt ſhe indignantly cried, "your love is "wounding to my honour—know, I am "too proud to be your miſtreſs, and I "have too much underſtanding to expect "to be your wife; this interview, there"fore, ſhall be our laſt, my liege. If "your bounty to my children originated "in the expectation of diſhonouring their "mother, I inſiſt on your reſuming

" the grant; I can live in poverty, but " I will not ſurvive diſgrace."

The king attempted to renew his ſeducing arts, but ſhe would not liſten to him on the ſubject, and a gloomy ſilence enſued.—At length St. Maur came acroſs the thought of the diſcontented and diſappointed monarch. " A nephew of " the ducheſs," ſaid he, " is priſoner " at St. Julian's, and I wiſhed to have " ſpoken to her upon the ſubject."

This was the firſt intelligence which had reached Graſton of his capture. " Is " it St. Maur?" ſaid ſhe, with a countenance of extreme alarm.

Edward remarked the emotion, and ſtill farther to try her: " It is he," he anſwered, " and he is condemned to " death."

" Heavens!—to death?" exclaimed Elizabeth, pale and gaſping for reſpiration, for ſhe loved Eleanor, knew her mother's

mother's fondneſs for him, and regarded him herſelf as a brother.

"Yes, madam," ſaid he, with a piercing look—"he dies within an hour."

"Oh, my gracious ſovereign," ſaid ſhe, falling on her knees before him, "for the ſake of my mother, to whom "he is infinitely dear; and as you value "humanity and virtue, ſpare the wor-"thieſt, the moſt amiable of youths."

"You know, madam, how to oblige "me to grant *every* requeſt of yours—" She roſe with dignity——"then he "muſt die, my lord; though I ſhall "deeply mourn his fate, I will no more "plead for his life; not even my dear "mother's would I purchaſe with diſ-"honour."

Edward roſe haſtily, ruſhed paſt her, ran to his horſe, vaulted into the ſaddle, and galloped off full ſpeed, leaving Kent to follow him; and the moment he reached

reached Longueville caſtle, ordered St. Maur into his preſence.

The fine perſon, and graceful manner of that young man, which had before charmed him, were now poiſon to his eyes, for he ſaw in them the perfections of a ſucceſsful rival. "I have ſeen," ſaid he, ſternly, "not the ducheſs of Bed-"ford, but one, perhaps, to whom you "are ſtill dearer——"

"Oh, my lord!" ſaid St. Maur, his fine eyes lighting up, "have you ſeen "the beloved of my ſoul?—and has ſhe "condeſcended to ſpeak for me?"

"Oh, yes," anſwered the king, with an inflamed countenance, "you have "great dependance on her love, I per-"ceive."

"After our mutual vows, it would "diſhonour her to doubt it—no, I was "well aſſured all her ſoft, her heavenly "eloquence would be exerted in my fa-"vour."

" You are a happy man, ſir," ſaid Edward, half choaked, " and a king " may envy you—go—you are at liberty " —but it is only on this condition, that " you ſee her no more."

St. Maur was thunderſtruck—" And " is this the condition annexed to life?" he cried, lifting up his eyes to heaven—a death of torture is more deſirable—" take back your cruel gift, my lord, I " accept it not—I had better fall by " your executioner, than my own deſ- " pair."

" Thou haſt thy wiſh then.—St. Julian, " take him hence, ſee he is inſtantly ex- " ecuted—I will ſend his head a preſent " to Grafton."

In that moment Kent, who had been aſtoniſhed at the king's abrupt departure from Grafton, and followed immediately, entered; and St Julian, whoſe heart had been torn with anguiſh at the increaſing danger

danger of his ſon, grinned horrible delight at being enabled to render one human being as wretched as himſelf, and led off St. Maur in triumph.

But determined that he ſhould no more elude his malice, though he could have wiſhed to have prolonged his life for torture, and ſeen him expire by ſlow degrees in excruciating agonies; yet, for fear the king ſhould countermand orders, which ſeemed to be given in paſſion, he reſolved upon the moſt ſummary method of execution. St. Maur was, therefore, led into a yard belonging to the kitchen, his head laid upon a large block of wood, and an axe, ſuch as was uſed for cutting wood for firing, put into the hands of a ſtrong menial ſervant, who was commanded to perform the office of decapitation.

The ſervant, averſe to obeying the cruel command, though fearful of diſ-

pleaſing his lord, lifted up the ponderous axe, and his heart failing him, let it fall heavy, and harmleſs, to the earth. St. Julian ſtormed—again the man lifted it up in air, with both his hands; but, as it waved there, fearful, irreſolute, a voice ſcreamed from without—"Stop, ſtop your bloody purpoſe!" and the earl of Kent ran in, breathleſs, with haſte and apprehenſion, leſt he came too late. Kent entered, as has been ſaid, when St. Maur was led off. The king inſtantly informed him of what had paſſed at Grafton, and what he had ordered ſince his return in conſequence of it. And Kent, who had ſome knowledge of St. Maur, and was particularly intereſted in every one who was related to the lovely Anne, repreſented, with ſo much eloquence, the impolicy of mortally offending Elizabeth by the death of her lover, whom it would be very poſſible, in

ſome

ſome future opportunity, to ſupplant, that the king yielded to his reaſons and importunities; and Kent hurried out on the merciful commiſſion: but, ſuch w the expeditious malice of St. Julian, tha , had not the executioner been tardy in his office, the mandate would have arrived too late.

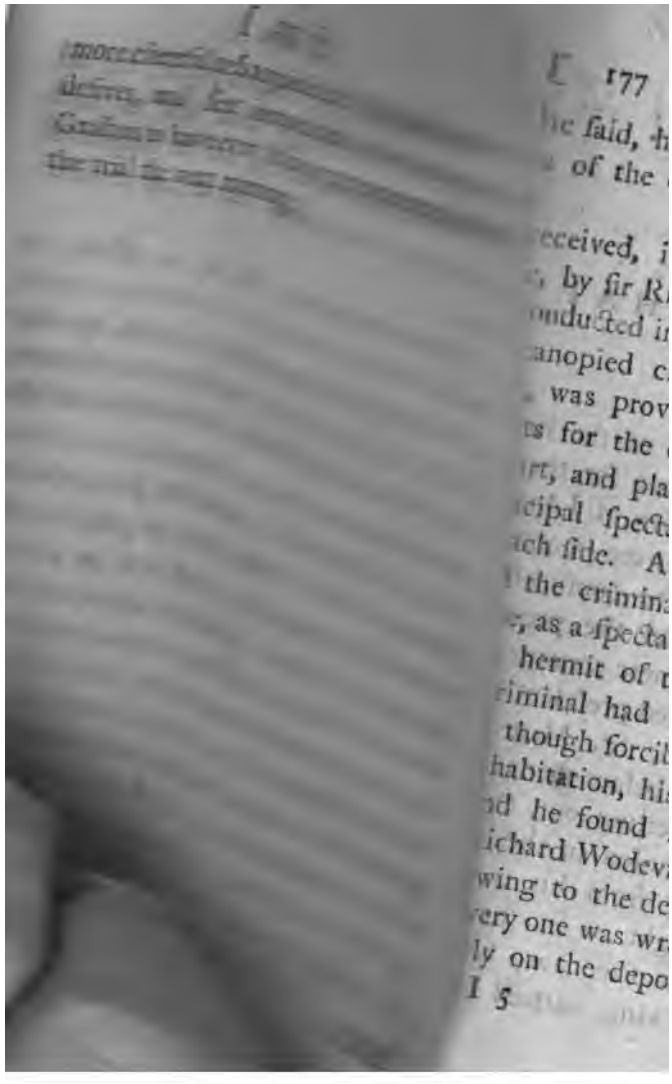
Enraged at the interruption, and determined, if it was poſſible, not to relinquiſh his prey, St. Julian followed Kent, and the reſerved St. Maur, to the preſence of the king, where he accuſed that young man of the aſſaſſination of the earl de Longueville.

Edward, though he was inclined to remit the *political* crimes of his ſuppoſed rival, heard him with pleaſure accuſed of one which he imagined muſt render him hateful in the eyes of Elizabeth: and he took the immediate reſolution of making her a witneſs, both of the guilt of

her lover, and his own juſtice; he had officers enough about him to form a military court, and he determined to try him by martial law at Grafton.

Impetuous in all his paſſions, he would hear of no objections to the trying a crime againſt *civil* ſociety, in a court *military*; every order and rule of decency, every law, both civil and military, had been overturned or neglected in theſe times of anarchy: and St. Julian, who delighted in neither the place, nor the mode of trial; yet, as he was able to produce the poſitive oaths of two undaunted witneſſes, as he could alſo produce the piece of the letter ſigned by St. Maur himſelf, which he had taken care to preſerve; and as he was moreover ſatisfied with his influence over the mind of the king, by whoſe pleaſure he knew this mock court would be directed, with the more

more cheerfulneſs acquieſced in Edward's deſires, and ſent immediate orders to Grafton to have every thing prepared for the trial the next morning.



CHAP. XXIV.

EARLY on the important morning, deſtined for the trial of St. Maur, the families of Longueville caſtle and Grafton, were in commotion. The officers, who conſtituted the court, were nominated the preceding night; and one, a mere creature of the king's, was appointed preſident. All proceeded to Grafton, St. Maur being carried in chains before them; when, juſt as they were ſetting out, the aged hermit, his companion in the vale, who had recovered from his indiſpoſition, and was brought, as St. Julian had ordered, to the caſtle, was, by the command of the king, carried to Grafton alſo, as it was

was probable, he ſaid, he might elucidate ſome parts of the criminal's conduct.

They were received, in melancholy and ſolemn ſtate, by ſir Richard Wodeville's family, conducted into the great hall, where a canopied chair, on the high raiſed deis, was provided for the king, proper ſeats for the officers who compoſed the court, and places for the family, and principal ſpectators, who were ranged on each ſide. At the ſteps of the deis ſtood the criminal, and at ſome little diſtance, as a ſpectator of the ſcene, the ancient hermit of the vale; for as nothing criminal had been alleged againſt him, though forcibly torn from his peaceful habitation, his limbs were unfettered, and he found himſelf in the hall of ſir Richard Wodeville, ſo looſely guarded, owing to the deep attention in which every one was wrapt at the trial, particularly on the depoſition

of the two witneſſes, whoſe evidence was long and circumſtantial, of St. Maur's hiring them to perpetrate the murder of the venerable earl, that father Anthony found no impediment to leaving the room; which he did, unperceived by his guard (and, indeed, unmiſſed by them afterwards) at the cloſe of the depoſition of the ſecond.

When the king was firſt ſeated in his chair of ſtate, he looked round, and was diſappointed at not perceiving lady Grey preſent. "I could have wiſhed, madam," ſaid he, to the ducheſs, "that all your "family would have witneſſed my juſ-"tice."

"Elizabeth is coming, my lord," ſhe replied. The eyes of the priſoner had made the ſame ſcrutiny, and he ſighed at perceiving the abſence of Eleanor.—In a moment both were gratified, for Elizabeth appeared, with a countenance of deep affliction, leading a lady, whoſe ſorrows

were

were ſhrouded under a thick veil, and whom the heart of St. Maur recogniſed as the daughter of him of whoſe murder he was accuſed.

The king, enraged at lady Grey's evident partiality for the priſoner, called, in a tone of angry authority, to St. Julian to open the trial.

This enemy of St. Maur then ſtood forth, and, after an artful ſpeech, calculated to inflame the minds of the audience, accuſed him of the aſſaſſination of the noble earl de Longueville by the hands of hired ruffians; corroborated this accuſation by producing the letter found in the pocket of the dead aſſailant; and proved it incontrovertibly by the oaths of two men, who ſwore poſitively that they received money of St. Maur to perpetrate the murder; that they *did* perpetrate it, and threw the body into a deep pit.

There was no reſiſting this weight of evidence. It is true, the witneſſes were unknown to all in the court but St. Julian; but, as nothing good from that circumſtance could be ſaid of them, ſo alſo, from the ſame circumſtance could no other evil be alleged than the vile action of which they had accuſed themſelves—it was *compunction* urged the accuſation; ſo *they* aſſerted, ſo *St. Julian* believed; and St. Julian "*was an honour-*"*able man.*"

In the mournful murmur which ran through the court, Eleanor read the deſtiny of her lover, and her heart was torn with peculiar diſtreſſes. She believed him innocent, yet adjudged by the world guilty. Her tears for the ſuppoſed aſſaſſin, muſt mark with diſgrace the eyes of de Longueville's daughter; yet, in vain ſhe endeavoured to repreſs them, they ſtreamed beneath her veil, and ſhe ſunk,

ſunk, half fainting, upon the ſhoulder of Elizabeth; who, unable to whiſper any words of ſoft conſolation, could only teſtify, by her ſympathizing tears, the part ſhe took in her grief; and by them, farther irritated the mind of the angry king.

St. Maur was now called upon to make his defence—but, alas! no other defence was he able to make, than the ſolemn aſſeveration of a knight and a gentleman, that he was not guilty of a crime incompatible with the character of either. The mere aſſertion of a man's *own* innocence, though that man is the greateſt on earth, cannot, ought not to preponderate againſt the teſtimony upon oath of two witneſſes, though thoſe witneſſes are from the dregs of human nature. Small time was neceſſary to collect the votes of the court by their preſident; their opinions were

were unanimous, and he ſtood forth to pronounce the ſentence.

He began with great ſolemnity to addreſs the priſoner, when a noiſe at the lower end of the hall interrupted him, and an officer of the court commanded ſilence; but the command was unheeded, the noiſe increaſed; all eyes were turned towards the place from whence it proceeded, and they beheld a man, venerable and majeſtic, breaking through the croud (who all knew him, and were hailing him with joyful acclamations) and approaching the court——

——" My *father!* Oh, my *father!*" cried Eleanor, as ſhe tore off her veil, and flew into his arms; where, through exceſs of joy, ſhe fainted.

" Is it poſſible," cried ſir Richard, " do I ſee my brother de Longueville?"

" You ſee him," he anſwered, " and " you ſee him happy, in being enabled,

" at

" at this juncture, to reſcue this virtuous " young man from the oppreſſion of his " enemy. I, my liege," continued he, addreſſing the king, " am the perſon of " whoſe murder this youth is accuſed. " My appearance invalidates the teſti- " mony of the *actual* guilt, I exculpate " him from the *intentional*, and I beſeech " your highneſs to order off thoſe irons " which diſhonour him."

They were inſtantly taken off, he ran to embrace his deliverer; and Eleanor, being ſtill in her ſwoon, his behaviour evinced to the king, who with the eye of jealouſy purſued his every motion, that he had erred when he deemed St. Maur his rival. Eaſed of his tormenting ſuſpicions, Edward could now partake, and, by his participation, heighten the general joy; for, where his intereſt or his paſſions did not interfere, he was neither unjuſt nor ungenerous.

Whilſt

Whilſt the greateſt part of this aſſembly delivered themſelves up to the moſt delicious tranſports, St. Julian, as ſoon as he recovered the firſt thunderſtroke, ſlunk off, unperceived, to that caſtle he had ſo lately deemed his own; where, to fill up the meaſure of his wretchedneſs, he was informed that his ſon had that moment expired.

Oppreſſed at once with ſhame and grief, deſpair ſeized his ſoul; he flew into his ſon's apartment, kiſſed and embraced the lifeleſs body, and then plunged a dagger into his own heart.

Let us return to a more happy ſcene—to de Longueville, ſeated in the hall at Grafton, his daughter beſide him, juſt recovered her fainting fit, leaning her head on his ſhoulder, the precious tears of pleaſure glittering on the returning roſes of her cheek. St. Maur ſitting on the floor at her feet, lifting up his black ſparkling

ſparkling eyes to her's, expreſſive of the fondeſt love, and meeting the timid glance of ſoft and delicate affection in return, the family all liſtening with attention to his intereſting ſtory. The youthful monarch, not the leaſt delighted of his auditory, angling, by his ſeducing glances, for the fair widow's heart.

" I was taking my uſual morning's " walk," ſaid the earl, " in a grove con- " tiguous to my garden, when I found " myſelf ſuddenly ſurrounded by four " men. I drew my ſword, and wounded, " mortally, as it proved, one of them; " but, diſarmed by the reſt, I was re- " peatedly ſtabbed, till they deemed me " dead; and they were dragging me to- " wards a deep pit, when, alarmed by " ſome noiſe—guilt is full of alarm— " two of them fled; thoſe very villains, " I am perfectly aſſured, who witneſſed " againſt St. Maur; the third, by much " the leaſt hardened, as he ſtood over

" my

" my bleeding body, was ſtruck with
" remorſe, his heart ſmote him with in-
" gratitude, for I had ſeveral times
" greatly befriended him: he fancied
" he ſaw ſigns of life, and he formed the
" immediate reſolution of repairing the
" injury. He bore me on his ſhoulders
" to a place of ſecurity; he had ſome
" ſkill in wounds; he examined mine,
" found them not mortal, dreſſed them,
" and on my revival from my long and
" deep ſwoon, aſſured me of his faithful
" care. He told me he had ſaved my
" life at the hazard of his own; but my
" merely breathing exiſtence for many
" months, was ſcarcely worthy the name
" of life—ſo feeble, ſo debilitated was I;
" and when my ſtrength returned, I
" found I had nothing left to render life
" deſirable—my wife was dead; no one
" knew what was become of my daugh-
" ter; my wealth was in the hands of St.
" Julian, who had fortified himſelf

" with

" with royal authority; and was I known
" to exiſt, my faithful companion aſſured
" me, every art would be eſſayed to render
" the ſecond blow more certainly fatal.
" By his advice, therefore, I ſome time
" concealed myſelf in a hermit's dreſs,
" and he conducted me to a cave near the
" ſea in Northumberland; but this place
" being dreadful in winter, and having
" loſt my friend, who was drowned, I
" forſook it, and wandering into Weſt-
" moreland, I lighted on St. Maur, as
" I have ſince diſcovered him to be, in
" the ſame dreſs. A congeniality of ſoul
" cemented the caſual meeting into
" friendſhip, though unknown to each
" other. He conducted me to his re-
" tirement, and there I have reſided,
" till I was ſeized by the order of St.
" Julian.

" Nothing could exceed my ſurprize
" this morning, on being brought into

" this

" this place, to find St. Julian had the
" addreſs to ſhift his own guilt upon the
" head of another: with aſtoniſhment I
" heard the calm and deliberate perjury
" of the ruffians who witneſſed againſt
" St. Maur. I was ready indignantly to
" ruſh forward to diſprove their evi-
" dence; but I reflected, that in my vile
" and ſqualid weeds, changed likewiſe
" in perſon by ſickneſs and ſorrow, no
" one would recognize me, and that I
" ſhould probably draw puniſhment on
" myſelf as an impoſtor, inſtead of
" procuring the acquittal of my friend.
" I perceived that I was not attended to
" by my guards, whoſe every faculty
" was engroſſed by the ſcene before
" them; I walked out, and no one im-
" peded my progreſs to your chamber,
" my good brother Wodeville, for every
" ſervant in the family had ſtationed
" themſelves in the hall. Here I found

" every

" every article neceſſary to complete a
" dreſs proper for me to wear in my own
" character; which, without craving
" leave, I took the liberty of borrowing
" —you will, I know, pardon me; and
" on my return, announcing myſelf to
" ſome neareſt the door, I was inſtantly
" known by the reſt, whoſe obſtrepe-
" rous expreſſions of pleaſure ſoon awak-
" ened the notice of the court."

Mutual congratulations ſucceeded the earl's recital. A feaſt was prepared, of which the youthful and gallant monarch, with all the urbanity of his character, partook. Intoxicated with love, though not with wine, at the hoſpitable board, and feeling that royalty would loſe its charms without lady Grey, he, as he found he could not poſſeſs her upon leſs honourable terms, offered her, before he ſlept, his hand and crown; and forgot, in the delicious moment of her ſoft con-

ſent,

ſent, that the earl of Warwick was then in France, negotiating for him a marriage with the French king's ſiſter, the lady Bona.

But all fears of incurring the reſentment of ſo potent a ſubject, whoſe influence and abilities united, could crown and uncrown monarchs, all apprehenſions of drawing upon himſelf a war with France, in the preſent unſettled ſtate of his affairs, faded in the heart of Edward before his all-ſubduing paſſion for Elizabeth, as the features of a waxen image are loſt in the blaze of a meridian ſun; and he was privately wedded to her, on the ſame day St. Maur was made happy with Eleanor.

Declining, with grateful acknowledgements, both for himſelf and his children, the liberal offers of the king and queen; preferring the placid joys of private life to the buſtle and *eclat* of a court,

the

the earl de Longueville took poſſeſſion once more of his caſtle, aſſured that the inclinations of his charming daughter, and her amiable huſband, coincided with his own; where his firſt act was largely to reward the enraptured Fronſac, for his faithful ſervices to Eleanor.

Nor was the beauteous bride of St. Maur unmindful of former friendſhips. The duke and ducheſs of Suffolk received the thanks due to their beneficence. By the aſſiſtance of the queen, ſhe procured the eſtate of ſir Philip du Camp to be granted to his daughter; and had the ſatisfaction of renewing her friendſhip with Yolante, in the ſame caſtle which had been ſo productive of ſingular events; and, with the approbation of the earl and her huſband, Eleanor invited father Gregory to reſide in Longueville caſtle: where, in the

the happineſs that ſurrounded his lovely patroneſs, that good man appeared to forget that he had ever been miſerable.

FINIS.